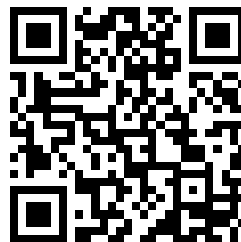

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ONCE A WEEK

FOURTH SERIES.

VOLUME IV.

MARCH, 1876, TO AUGUST, 1876.

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Thereby Hangs a Tale.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER XXII.—AUNT MATTY IS CROSS.

SIR HAMPTON started as his eyes fell upon Trevor, and his pink complexion began to grow red.

"Oh, Fin!" whispered Tiny, heedless of the admiring gaze of Vanleigh, who now advanced; while after saluting Lady Rea, Landells turned to Fin.

"This is Mr. Trevor, called to see us, dear," said Lady Rea.

"Er-rum!" went Sir Hampton, and he bristled visibly; but Trevor approached with extended hand.

"Sir Hampton," he said, "I came to apologize for my very hasty behaviour to you. I'm afraid I gave you a very bad opinion of your neighbour."

"Er-rum! I—er! I—er-rum" said and coughed Sir Hampton, hesitating; but there was the hand of amity stretched out, and he was obliged to take it—moving with great dignity, and looking at Trevor as if he had just pardoned a malefactor for committing some heinous crime.

"Didn't 'spect to see y' here," said Sir Felix, making play with his glass at everybody in turn.

"The surprise is mutual," said Trevor.

"Odd coincidence," said Vanleigh, who had crossed now to Miss Matilda, like a good diplomatist. "We were walking, after you ran away from us, and met Sir Hampton."

"Er-rum—Mr. Trevor," said Sir Hampton, pompously, "I am in your debt; your friends here were kind enough to give my daughters and myself the use of your carriage after a very—er-rum—narrow escape from a terrible—er-rum—catastrophe. I am very much obliged."

"Don't name it, Sir Hampton, pray," said Trevor. "Out here in this place, we are all obliged to rely upon one another for a little help. I shall have to beg favours of you, some day, I hope."

"Er-rum—you are very good," said Sir Hampton, stiffly.

"Yes, Hampton, dear!" said Lady Rea, "Mr. Trevor is really very kind: he has promised us a lot of those beautiful gladioli that you admired so when you went over Penreife grounds."

Sir Hampton bowed to Trevor, and looked daggers at his wife, who glanced then at Fin, as much as to say—"What have I done now?"

"A particularly fine specimen, I should say," Vanleigh was heard to remark.

"Do you think so?" said Miss Matilda, meekly.

"I should say perfectly pure," said Vanleigh, stooping to caress Pepine, who snarled and tried to bite.

"Fie, Pepine, then!" said Miss Matilda. "Don't be afraid of him, Captain Vanleigh."

"I am not," said Vanleigh, showing his white teeth, and taking the terrier in his hands. "Look here, Landells, what should you say of this dog?"

Sir Felix refixed his glass, and crossed to his friend. "Markably fine terrier," said Sir Felix, "most decidedly."

And he touched Pepine, and was bitten playfully on the glove.

"You remember the dog you sent to the Palace Show?"

"'Member perfectly," said Sir Felix; "splen' collection."

"But did you see a finer bred specimen than that—say frankly?"

"Nothing like it; 'fectly sure of it."

"There, Miss Rea," said Vanleigh, "and Landells is one of the finest amateur judges of dogs in the country."

"Is he really?" said Miss Matilda, smiling.

"Oh, yes," said Vanleigh. "What should you think that dog was worth, Landells?"

"Any money," said Sir Felix; "five at least."

"But I gave ten pounds for it," said Miss Matilda, indignantly.

"Exactly," said Vanleigh. "Then you obtained it at a great bargain."

"But he said five pounds," said Miss Matilda.

"Exactly, my dear madam," said Vanleigh. "That is the judge's fashion—five pounds a paw; twenty pounds."

"Oh, I see!" said Miss Matilda, and Trevor turned aside, for he had encountered Fin's laughing eyes, and her pinched-up mouth had said dumbly—

"My! What a fib!"

After a little more conversation, the trio took their leave, and there was peace between the dwellers at Penreife and Tolcarne for many days to come.

"Er-rum," said Sir Hampton, as soon as they were alone. "I am not very agreeably impressed with this Mr. Trevor."

"Aren't you, dear?" said Lady Rea; "and I thought him such a nice, gentlemanly, frank fellow, and so did the girls."

"Sadly wanting in manners," said Aunt Matty. "Quite as you said, Hampton—rough and uncultivated."

Sir Hampton nodded his head approvingly.

"But he don't call out 'Avast!' and 'Ship ahoy!' and 'Haul in the slack,' as you said he would, aunty," said Fin.

"Finetta, I never made use of any such language," said Miss Matilda.

"Then it must have been I," said Fin. "I know somebody said so."

"Most gentlemanly men the friends you introduced, Hampton—especially Captain Vanleigh."

"And the dog-fancier with the glass," put in Fin, in an undertone; but her aunt heard her.

"Hampton," she said, viciously, "I am unwilling to make complaints, but I am sorry to say that the treatment I receive from Finetta is anything but becoming. Several times this afternoon her remarks to me have been such as when I was a little girl I should never have thought of using, and I should have been severely reprimanded if I had said a tithe."

"Why, I thought tithes were parsons' payments, aunty," said Fin, merrily; and Aunt Matty stopped short, Lady Rea turned away to smile, and Sir Hampton actually chuckled.

Miss Matilda gathered up her skirts, and taking Pepine under her arm, was marching out of the room.

"Please, aunt, I'm very sorry," said Fin. "I'm afraid I'm a very naughty little girl, and shall have to be punished. Papa, can I have any dinner?"

"Er-rum. Matilda," said Sir Hampton, "I am going on the lawn. Will you come?"

Aunt Matty was mollified, and took his arm.

"You shouldn't, Fin, indeed," said Tiny.

"My darling, I must beg of you not," said Lady Rea, piteously.

"Then she sha'n't snub my darling, dear mamma," said Fin, kissing her. "I'm never saucy to Aunt Matty only when she says rude things to you; treating me like a child, too! Oh, mamma, if you ever find me growing into a sour old maid, pray poison me with something hidden in a spoonful of currant jam."

CHAPTER XXIII.—PROPOSALS.

"IF you wish it, Hampton, of course have it; but I think the money that it will cost might very well be given to some missionary fund," said Miss Matilda.

"Er-rum! When I want your advice, Matty, I shall ask it," said Sir Hampton. "I must keep up my dignity in the county."

"You could do it in no better way, Hampton, than by subscribing to the South Sea Islander Society—'Sir Hampton Rea, twenty guineas,' in the county paper, would add more to your dignity than giving a dinner party."

This was at breakfast, and Fin cast malicious glances at her sister, who was blushing, and bending over her plate.

"Fanny!—er-rum!" continued Sir Hampton, not seeming to notice his sister, "we'll say Friday. You will send invitations to—er-rum—let me see!"

"Stop a minute, Hampy, dear," cried her ladyship, making a scuffle to get at something. "There—oh! now, how tiresome—that cream jug always gets in the way. Thank you, Fin, my dear; take it up with a spoon—it isn't hurt."

"Oh, ma, dear," cried Fin, "the cream will taste of hot washerwoman and mangles. You can't use it now."

"Oh, I'll drink it, my dear—oh!" she added, in a low voice, "Aunt Matty will think it such waste."

"Are you ready, Fanny?" said Sir Hampton, rolling his head in his stiff cravat.

"One moment, Hampy," said her ladyship, getting both pencil and tablets. "My memory is so bad now, I must put them down."

"Then—er-rum—first we'll say—"

"Ah, one moment, Hampy; this tiresome pencil's got no point again."

"Take mine, ma, dear," said Fin.

"Thank you, my love. Now, pa."

"Er-rum," said Sir Hampton—"first, then, we'll have er—er—Sir Felix Landells."

Aunt Matty bowed her head approvingly.

"E, double L, S," said Lady Rea, writing. "Don't shake me, Fin, there's a dear."

For Lady Rea had come undone at the back of her dress, and Fin was busy with a pin at her collar.

"Er-rum!" continued Sir Hampton. "Next we'll have Captain Vanleigh."

And he looked hard at Tiny, who bent lower over her plate.

"Van, l—tut-tut-tut, how do you spell leigh, e first or i first?" said Lady Rea.

"Shall I write them down for you, Fanny?" said Aunt Matty.

"No, thank you, Matty," said Lady Rea, who was getting into a knot. "There, I shall know what that means."

"Er-rum!" said Sir Hampton; "Mr. Mervyn."

"La! Hampy," said Lady Rea, looking up, "you haven't said Mr. Trevor."

"Mis-ter—er-rum—Mervyn!" exclaimed Sir Hampton, sharply.

"Oh, there, my dear, don't fly at me like that," cried Lady Rea. "M, e, r, v, i—"

"Y, Fanny, y," said Aunt Matty, with a shudder.

"Oh, yes, y, of course," said Lady Rea, good humouredly; "y, n, Mervyn. Next?"

The girls bent their heads—Tiny over her breakfast, Fin smoothing the rather towzled hair of her mother.

"Er-rum, I suppose I must ask this—er-rum—Trevor."

"Surely, Hampton," exclaimed Aunt Matty, "you will not think of asking that objectionable person."

Fin glanced at her sister, whose face was crimson, and Lady Rea looked pained.

"Matty, my dear, I think you are wrong. I—"

"Have you got that name down, Lady Rea?" said Sir Hampton.

"No, dear; but I soon will have," said her ladyship, making her pencil scramble over the paper.

"Er-rum!" ejaculated Sir Hampton, rising, puffing himself out, and walking slowly up and down the room; "a man in my position is obliged to make sacrifices, and ask people to whom he objects. In the event of my contesting the county, such a man as this—er-rum—this—er-rum—Trevor would be useful. I thank you, Matty; you mean, er—mean—rum, well. Put his name down, Fanny."

"I have, my love," said Lady Rea, beaming at her children.

"Hampton, I protest against this outrage," said Aunt Matty, "after the marked way in which he has—"

"Tiny, come and cut some flowers," said Fin; and her sister gladly beat a retreat, Fin whispering as they went—

"Will he ask the little man?"

"Now, Matty," said Sir Hampton, "have the goodness to proceed; and in future, when you enter upon such subjects, have the kindness to—er-rum—remember that I am not deaf."

"I say, Hampton, after the marked way in which that seafaring person has behaved to Valentina, it is most indiscreet to ask him here."

"Oh, Matty," cried Lady Rea, "I'm sure that young man is as nice as can be."

"If that was what you intended to say, Matilda—er-rum—it would have been most indecent before those children," said Sir Hampton, pompously.

"In—"

Aunt Matty could not say it, the word was too outrageous.

"I feel bound—er-rum—bound," said Sir Hampton, with emphasis, "to ask the young man as a proprietor, even as we might ask a tenant, Fanny."

"Yes, my love."

"Put down that lawyer as well, Mr.—er, er—Mr.," he got the name out with great disgust at last, "Pratt," and carefully wiped his mouth afterwards.

"You'll be sorry for this, Hampton," said Miss Matilda, shaking with virtuous indignation, so that some frozen dewdrops in her head-dress quivered again, and Pepine, who had been surreptitiously nursed under a canopy of table cloth, received, in her excitement, such

a heavy nip from his mistress's knees, that he uttered an awful howl.

"Er-rum!—sorry?"

"Yes, sorry. That objectionable person is always hanging about the house like—like—like a vagrant; and those girls never go for a walk without being accosted by him or his companion. If you have any eyes, you ought to see."

"Oh, Matty, pray don't," said Lady Rea, appealingly.

"Er-rum! Silence, Fanny," said Sir Hampton. "And as for your remarks, Matilda, they are uncalled for. My children would not, I am sure, encourage the—er-rum—advances of that person; and Lady Rea would be one of the first to crush any—er-rum—thing of the kind."

"Indeed!" said Aunt Matty, spitefully.

"That—er-rum—will do," said Sir Hampton. "Fanny, those will be our guests. See that the dinner is worthy of our position."

He went out like a stout, elderly emperor of florid habit, and, as soon after as was possible, Lady Rea beat a retreat, leaving Aunt Matty taking dog, after her habit, in strokes with one hand, holding a pocket handkerchief cake in the other; "and looking," Edward, the footman, said in the kitchen, after removing the breakfast things, "like a bilious image getting ready for a fit."

Sir Hampton's study was horticulture that morning; and, after swallowing a page on the manipulation of the roots of espaliers and pyramid trees, he was about to go out and attack Cutbush, the gardener, when Edward announced Sir Felix Landells and Captain Vanleigh on business, and they were shown in.

"Really—hope not deranging—untimely call," said Sir Felix.

"We will not detain you long, Sir Hampton," said Vanleigh, with a great show of deference.

"Er-rum, gentlemen," said Sir Hampton, whose face shone with pride, "in these rural—er-rum—districts, when one is—er-rum—far from society and town, sociability and hospitality should, er—"

"Go hand in hand—exactly," said Vanleigh, smiling.

"Er-rum, I am very glad to see you, gentlemen," said Sir Hampton. "Oddly—er-rum—oddly enough, we were discussing a little dinner for Friday. Could you—er-rum—both, both—er—honour us with your society?"

And he looked from one to the other.

"Well," said Vanleigh, hesitating, and glancing at Sir Felix, "it depends somewhat on— Would you like to speak out, Landells?"

"Sure you, no. Do it so much better. Pray go on."

And the young man turned crimson.

"Not pre-engaged, I hope?" said Sir Hampton.

"Well, Sir Hampton," said Vanleigh, modestly, after a pause, during which he sat with his eyes on the carpet, "this is all so new to me, and you have confused me so with your kind invitation, that my business—our business—comes doubly hard to us to state."

"Er-rum—pray go on," said Sir Hampton, smiling condescendingly, for all this was sweet to his soul: two scions of aristocratic houses with sense enough to respect his position in life. Captain Vanleigh might

have borrowed a hundred pounds on the instant had he killed; but he was playing for higher stakes.

"Then, if you won't speak, Landells, I must," said Vanleigh, who seemed overcome with confusion. "No doubt there is a proper etiquette to be observed in such cases, but I confess I am too agitated to recall it, and I merely appeal to you, Sir Hampton, as a gentleman and a parent."

Sir Hampton bowed, and uttered a cough that seemed wrapped up in cotton wool, it was so soft.

"The fact is, Sir Hampton, we have been here now three weeks—Landells and I—and we have been so charmed, so taken with your sweet daughters, that, in this hurried, confused way—I tell you, in short, we thought it right, as gentlemen, to come first and tell you, to ask you for your permission to visit more frequently, to be more in their society—to, in short, make formal proposals for their hands."

There was another soft cough, and Vanleigh continued:

"I hope I am forgiven, Landells, for my awkward way?"

"Yes. Pray go on; capital," said Landells, who was perspiring profusely.

"It is only fair to say how we are placed in the world, Sir Hampton. My friend there, Sir Felix, has his eight thousand per annum; and it will increase. For myself, I am but a poor officer of the Guards."

"Er-rum! a gentleman is never poor," said Sir Hampton, with dignity.

"I think I can say no more, Sir Hampton," said Vanleigh, bowing to the compliment. "You see now my hesitation about the dinner; for, of course, if you refuse to regard our application favourably, to-morrow we should—eh, Landells?"

"Back—town—certainly," said Sir Felix, wiping his face.

"Er-rum!" said Sir Hampton, rising and placing a hand in his breast. "Gentlemen, you take me by surprise, and you ask a great deal in—er-rum—I say you ask a great deal—I, er-rum, I—honoured by your—er-rum—proposals—and—and—er-rum, if I express myself badly, it is a father's emotion. In short, I—er-rum—gentlemen—I, er-rum, give both my full consent to visit here as often as you wish, and Lady Rea and my daughters shall be acquainted with your proposals. I can, er-rum, say no more now. Let us join the ladies."

Sir Felix, with tears in his eyes, took and wrung the old man's hand, and, as the friends followed him out, Vanleigh bestowed upon the young baronet a most solemn, but very vulgar, wink.

ANGRY MAMMALS.—Recently a shoal of whales of large size put into the Dowry Voe, near Lerwick, and were seen by the fishermen to sport and tumble about as if in play. Six boats were manned and put off in chase, but the monsters seemed in no wise shy, and at once showed fight. They swam towards every boat in the water, and drove them into the shore. The fishing boats were of small size, used for herring fishing in the bays. In the course of the pursuit one small boat was struck by one of the infuriated animals, and upset. The men in the boat, two in number, had a narrow escape, and only saved their lives by jumping on to the rocks, to which they clung.

The Man in the Open Air.

SNOW—Mother Earth's counterpane—was scarcely thrown over the land than it was hurried to the bed of the river, to chill the fish and disappoint the angler. This said snow is certainly a subject for wonder. But how little do the generality of people know of it. When the Oriental first saw snow fall in this country, he fell upon his knees in adoration of its Maker, and in the fulness of his astonishment sought in vain, even from the most intelligent, the cause of the phenomenon. When he returned to the East, he was scarcely believed when he described the occurrence, and was treated with the fate of hatchet-throwers upon producing one memorandum given to him by a lady, in pure despair of showing a better explanation—it was the old woman picking her geese and throwing down the feathers. But this beautiful attribute of winter is referred to in the undying text: "Great things doeth He which we cannot comprehend: for He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth. . . . By his commandment He maketh the snow to fall apace; as birds flyeth He scattereth the snow; and the falling down thereof is as the lighting of grasshoppers—the eye marvelleth at the beauty of the whiteness thereof, and the heart is astonished at the raining of it." But we know now by the tell-tale of chemistry that snow depends for its formation upon the gradual congelation of watery vapour in clouds amid the higher and colder regions of the air, where its capacity for heat is increased by expansion: the water thus becoming solidified, loses the support of the air, and the newly formed crystalline snow-flakes, in obeying the attraction of gravitation, descend, and cover the earth with a mantle of spotless white. "This," says Thomas Griffiths, "perfectly conceals the lowly remnants of vegetation from our sight, but we have reason to be grateful for its presence. The chemist discovers that snow is solid water in loosely compacted crystalline flakes, the beautiful form of which may be readily determined by catching them on a piece of black cloth, or on the top of a black hat, and immediately examining them with a high magnifier. They may be found to present regular figures, which may be regarded as the framework or skeleton of the solid, six-sided prism in which water is more compactly frozen to constitute hail."

Like more massive ice, snow is a bad conductor of cold; it therefore protects seeds, bulbs, and roots from the chilling winds that sweep over its surface, as effectually as the shield of ice protects the being of the wave; in fact, vegetable productions are thus preserved from intense cold by snow-flakes as they would be by a fleece of wool. Thus, in the glorious and impressive language of Scripture, "He giveth snow like wool." This passage refers to the similarity between flakes of snow and fleeces of wool in whiteness and lightness, and also to their similarity in power of preserving warmth around the bodies which they shield and clothe. Snow, indeed, is a great preservative against the effects of cold. Wheat will continue growing beneath deep snow, whilst every blade would be killed by hard frost without snow. Beneath the surface, the temperature of snow is very little colder than 32 degrees, whilst the air above is frequently 20 to 15 degrees. It is well known that if a piece of ground be left covered with snow, and another contiguous piece

of ground swept clean, after a day or two, upon digging both, it will be found that the frost has penetrated very considerably below the surface of the piece unprotected by the snow; indeed, it is recorded, in illustration of this protecting power of snow, that in "Holland, during the cold winter of 1776, the surface of the earth was frozen to the depth of 21 in. on a spot of garden ground kept free from snow; but only to 9 in. on an adjacent spot covered with 4 in. of snow."

"In the northern regions, snow lying 12 ft. deep during winter preserves the vegetables which are destined to adorn the summer, although the cold may be many degrees below zero."

The notion generally entertained that snow is cold is therefore considerably shaken. The Esquimaux have learnt to convert snow into building materials, by which means they can raise a dwelling for their family in a few hours; a dwelling indeed which, from the purity of the material of which it is composed, the elegance of its construction, and the transparency of its walls, has an appearance superior to a marble building.

Having selected a spot where the snow is sufficiently compact, they commence by tracing out a circle of from 8 ft. to 15 ft. in diameter, proportioned to the number of occupants the hut is to contain. They then prepare a number of oblong slabs of snow, of six or seven inches thick, and about two feet in length, which are tenacious enough to admit of being moved without breaking, or even losing the sharpness of their angles. These slabs, which have a slight degree of curvature, are piled upon each other, and care is taken to make them fit closely together by running a knife along the under part and sides, and to cut them so as to give the wall a slight inclination inwards. Tier after tier is thus laid on by one man standing within the wall, who is supplied with material by one or more assistants from without. But for the better convenience of transmitting this supply to the workman, when the wall has attained a height of five or six feet, a hole is cut on the south side, close to the ground. Thus they continue labouring until they have brought the sides nearly to meet in a perfect and well-constructed dome, sometimes nine or ten feet high in the centre; and they take particular care in fitting the last block or keystone very nicely in the centre, dropping it into its place from the outside, though it is still done by the man inside; the people outside are in the meantime occupied in throwing up snow with the snow-shovel, and in stuffing in little wedges of snow where holes have been accidentally left. The builder next proceeds to let himself out by enlarging the hole in the south side into the form of a Gothic arch, intended as a doorway, three feet high and two feet and a half wide at the bottom; communicating with which he constructs two passages, each from ten to twelve feet long, and from four to five feet in height, the lowest being that next the hut. The roofs of these passages are sometimes arched, but more generally made flat by slabs laid on horizontally. In first digging the snow for building the hut, the workmen take it principally from the part where the passages are to be made, which purposely brings the floor of the latter considerably lower than that of the hut; but in no part do they dig till the bare ground appears. This completes the walls of the hut, where a single apartment alone is required. If several families are to reside under one roof, the passages are

made common to all, and the first apartment, in that case made smaller, forms a kind of antechamber, from which the entrance is through an arched doorway, 5 ft. high, into the inhabited apartments. When there are three of these, which is generally the case, the whole building, with its adjacent passages, forms a tolerably regular cross. For the admission of light, a round hole is cut on one side of the roof of each apartment, and a circular plate of fresh-water ice, 3 or 4 in. thick, and 2 ft. in diameter, let into it. The light is soft and pleasant, like that transmitted through ground glass, and is quite sufficient for every purpose. If fresh-water ice be not within reach, melted snow is poured into a vessel, and thus frozen into a transparent plate. When after some time these edifices become surrounded with drift, it is only by the windows they can be recognized as human habitations; and but for them, one might walk completely over them without suspecting the little hive of human beings that is comfortably established below. The next thing to be done is to raise a bank of snow, 2 ft. 6 in. high, all round the door. This bank, which is neatly squared off, forms their beds and fireplace, the former occupying the sides, and the latter the end opposite the door. The passage left open up to the fireplace is between 3 and 4 ft. wide. The beds are arranged by first covering the snow with a quantity of small stones, over which are laid their paddles, tent poles, and some blades of whalebone. Above these they place a number of little pieces of network, made of thin slips of whalebone, and lastly, a quantity of twigs of birch. Reindeer skins, which are very numerous, are now spread without risk of their touching the snow; and such a bed is capable of affording not merely comfort, but luxurious repose, in spite of the rigour of the climate. With the lamps lighted and the hut full of people and dogs, a thermometer placed on the net over the fire indicates a temperature of 38 degrees. When removed two or three feet from this position, it falls to 32 degrees. Placed close to the wall, it stands at 23 degrees, the temperature at the same time in the open air being 25 degrees below zero. A greater degree of warmth than this produces extreme inconvenience by drippings from the roofs. This they endeavour to obviate by applying a little piece of snow to the place from whence the drip proceeds, and this adhering, is for a short time an effectual remedy. But for several weeks in the spring, when the weather is too warm for these edifices, and still too cold for tents, they suffer much on this account. The interior appearance of these habitations is rendered more beautiful when they are situated on the ice, which, being cleared of the snow, presents a flooring of that splendid blue which is perhaps one of the richest colours in nature. As the spring advances the snow walls melt and freeze alternately, forming innumerable icicles, which reflect the light like radiant diamonds. Although this is very beautiful, it is a source of great trouble to the poor inhabitants, whose lungs become affected by repeated colds and coughs. For this reason, although the houses are formed of snow, coolness is the object always kept in view, and from the inexhaustible building materials always at hand, but little time and labour are required to effect any alterations or additions that may be requisite to secure this purpose.

In many parts of Germany they have a snow harvest. They collect the snow, and stack it in the corner of

a field exposed to the sun's rays, and thatched with straw from the top to the bottom. A trench is cut round this, ending in a well, which receives the drainage. When snow is wanted for household purposes and the dairy, the straw is pushed aside and the required quantity cut out, and in this way a stack of snow, when beaten down into a compact mass, will last until the following winter; but it must not be built in the shade, or it will become rotten, and rapidly deteriorate and melt.

G. F.

Anthropological Excavations in Sussex.

THE exploration committee of the Anthropological Society have published a report on the excavations at Cissbury Camp, which is situated on an eminence three miles north of Worthing. The report is drawn up by Colonel A. Lane Fox, the president. He discovered that the number of flint-flakes found on the surface at Cissbury were in excess of those found in other camps, such as the Devil's Dyke, Hollingbury, Chanctonbury, Beltout, and Seaford, and chiefly in the neighbourhood of a collection of large pits which filled the interior of the camp on the west side. The result of these excavations inclines Colonel Fox to think that the pits were made for the purpose of obtaining flints for implements.

The general resemblances of the Cissbury flint works to others in different parts of England and in Belgium having been satisfactorily determined, a question of still greater anthropological interest arose in the consideration of the relative age of the neolithic flint factory, and the entrenchment in which it is situated. Without entering fully into the details of the excavations made during the present year, it may be said that Colonel Lane Fox is convinced of the pre-Roman origin of the entrenchment, and that the flints are of the same age. He found some interesting relics, including, in the ditch, a nest of flint chips, 236 in number, and a rude chipped flint block, all of which were contained in a space of about two feet in diameter and one foot in depth. The greater part of the animal remains appeared to be those of domesticated animals. Rude flint instruments were found all through the filling, but chiefly in the red seam; charcoal was found at a depth of thirty feet below the upper margin; and pottery in the superficial soil was of a similar character to some of that found in the ditch, but at a depth of thirteen feet below the surface of the filling. The mines are of the neolithic age, although some of the instruments present forms connecting them with the palæolithic forms. Colonel Fox says he has nothing to alter from what he said eight years ago upon this point. The entrenchment is probably of pre-Roman times, as its form indicates, and the excavations in its ditch and rampart appear to prove. That flints were still in use after its erection is probable from the evidence adduced. No bronze instrument has been found at Cissbury, although Colonel Fox had formerly recorded the finding of one in the neighbouring but differently constructed camp of Highdown. No relic of Saxon date has been discovered, and the Romans, if they occupied it, cultivated it, as shown by their vineyard terraces in the interior of the camp, which would not have been there had they used it as a fort.

Sketches of the Central Wilds.

BY A WALKING WALLABY.

IV.—SETTLING DOWN.

OUT there in the wild solitude, it might be supposed that a dreary oppression would at times come upon a man, and to some extent, where he leads the solitary shepherd's life, this is the case; but in the busy pushing forward day after day, Harry found too much excitement to leave room for *ennui*, while old Joe Binks had always a good story ready over his pipe by night.

Joe was not a convict, but he always preserved a very strict silence respecting his early life. As to age, he looked to be sixty, but always declared that he would only be sixteen next birthday—saying in explanation that it would only be the sixteenth birthday he had had, having been born upon the twenty-ninth of February, and consequently depending upon leap year only.

But it was a long and weary journey, such as those accustomed to good English roads, and to seeing cattle rattled from one side to the other of a country in a few hours, can hardly realise, even though they may have pitied the efforts of a drover, while they admired his dog. Now they were in bush tracks, now travelling along stony ridges, or valleys thickly matted with grass, while sometimes for many miles they followed the course of a river. At times they would be at fault from the faintness of the track, and more especially as they reached parts of the country where the settlements became rare. At the last station where they stopped, they found an ominous reminder of the state of affairs, for it was the custom never to stir out unarmed; while they heard more than one doleful story of the outrages committed by the blacks: how one poor fellow had been horribly mutilated; how they lay in ambush, to attack the unwary with spear or club; in short, enough to discourage any one less sanguine than Harry.

His men, though, took their tone from their master, one saying that two could play at being nasty; another boasting of his skill with the rifle; and Harry's plan remained the same, for now, only some thirty miles from the river where he meant to settle, he heard all his previous information confirmed, and began to see for himself the riches of the place, where he had only to go and mark out for himself a noble estate, and then send an account thereof to the Crown Land Commissioners.

Harry's spirits rose as he saw the beauties of the country—one that, but for its distance and dangers, must ere then have been thronged; and already, in imagination, he peopled it with his own men, and dotted the pastures over with cattle and sheep. Wool stores and barns were springing up; press-houses and packing-sheds; tallow casks, and a boiling-house, and drays constantly going to and fro, as his riches increased more and more.

They were once more pressing slowly forward, with the land of their rest almost in sight. Joe had gently hinted at the advisability of settling at the last station, where they might give and receive support; but now so near the goal, and with the thought of being first upon the ground, Harry turned a deaf ear to the suggestion.

"Plenty of them dam black fellows, sir, as Jerry calls

them," said Joe, when they were close upon their journey's end, and he pointed to a couple of the natives hurrying out of sight. "Bad sign that, sir. Always tell when they mean to be friendly, they'll come begging like fun. What we have to do now is to keep them at a distance."

"Easily done, that, I should say," replied Harry. "They are ready enough to be scared."

"Ah! but only to get behind bushes, and come upon you unawares, sir. Always keep the muzzle of your rifle pointed at 'em, for they're as treacherous as—"

"Dere more dam black fellow," exclaimed Jerry, interrupting. "Now, shoot—shoot."

Harry laughed, but Joe looked serious.

"Best thing you could do, sir, for they mean mischief; and they'll do it, too, before we're much older. But if they leave us alone, we'll do the same; and mind, sir, though I don't believe all we heard at the last station—stories being always a good deal like ingy-rubber, and stretchy—there was a deal of truth in them tales, so be on the look-out."

Harry promised to take his shepherd's advice, and two days after their tents were well set up at Gurra Gully.

It was strange work living at Gurra Gully, where Harry Clayton set up his tent. As for the country, the rich pasturage showed how soon it would be a land flowing with milk, while even then the imported bees had made their way to where he had taken up country, so that the time was not so far distant when it should also abound with the honey. The cattle and sheep seemed to be recovering fast from their long journey, and revelled in the long grass and succulent herbage. Water was plentiful, the weather bright, and with the light canvas tent above their heads, Harry and his companions found but few hardships until their hut was built.

Provisions they had in plenty, and after the hard day's work the men enjoyed themselves by night over their pipes, the old shepherd and the convict servants telling stories by turns; while in spite of the character their general name conveyed, Harry found them steady, faithful fellows—the loneliness of their position knitting the men together; and whatever may have been the failings for which so many have been expatriated, it is a well-known fact that numbers of them became staunch and reputable citizens, farmers, or squatters in their new home.

A large run had been marked out by blazing trees, some five miles on either side of a little river, and about a couple of miles on either bank in depth; and as Harry Clayton cantered over this goodly estate which he had won from the wilderness, his heart swelled, and he revelled in imagination amongst the patriarchal joys of the to-be.

Doubtless a fair face at home played no mean part in the pictures he painted, as he reckoned how many years need pass before he claimed some one as his wife, either returning home to settle, or merely to fetch her over the sea to share his lot; while after each reverie he would work fiercely, and hurry his men, till Jerry, the black, could hardly obtain time for a siesta after one of his meals.

There seemed to be nothing to prevent Harry from accumulating wealth, for it was impossible but that his



"BRANDISHING THEIR LONG SPEARS."—(Page 9.)

stock must thrive and increase rapidly in such a land of Goshen. Their owner, new to the country, made little allowance for such drawbacks as droughts, floods, or diseases that should sweep off his flocks by the hundred. The hut was rising fast, wood was plentiful, and the men handy at felling and splitting, and removing the bark for thatching purposes. True, they had heard, and the black had told them, tales of the unfriendly tribe in the neighbourhood; but so far they had not seen a trace of the natives since some four days before reaching the Gully. Consequently all went on in fancied security. The dogs formed their only watch by night, for the men displayed a certain amount of recklessness, and were always ready to evade the duty of keeping a look-out for dangers which were merely of an apocryphal nature.

But the change came at last, and just when they felt most secure. Harry was standing one evening in front of the tent, looking out for the return of three of his men who were away with Jerry shepherding, the two lads were rubbing sheep close by in the pen, and from near the river the strokes of the other man's axe came echoing up as he felled a small tree.

All at once Harry started, for a loud, wild, appalling shriek rang out upon the still evening air; then the dogs began to bark furiously, and one, a huge hound, with something of the mastiff in his breed, came bounding up to his master.

For a moment Harry seemed paralyzed, then, recovering himself, he darted into his tent, thrust a revolver into his belt, and catching up a double rifle, ran in the direction of the river.

As he came out of the tent, another shriek—a thrilling, imploring cry for help—rang upon his ear, sending all precautionary measures to the winds with its self-evident interpretation that there was a soul in dire peril; and, with the dog bounding in front, Harry dashed on for the spot where the man had been at work, for the thought had struck him that the poor fellow must have been bitten by a snake, of which several had been seen.

The place was screened by bushes and low, scrubby trees, and it was not until close up that Harry could see the half-felled pine, and clean white chips; but the convict, Forlorn Lot, was nowhere to be seen.

Now, for the first time, it struck Harry that the man might have been attacked, and he called to mind half a dozen stories of the natives' cunning. He grew more startled, his heart beat heavily, and he felt ready to turn back; but shame urged him on, as, calling himself coward, he set his teeth and followed the dog into a clump of bushes, just as the beast stopped short, threw up its head, and uttered a long and dismal howl.

Again Harry paused and cocked his piece, then once more hurrying forward, he stood gazing upon a sight which might well make him shudder and quail with horror.

On the trampled grass, his limbs yet quivering in the death agony, lay one of the natives, nude with the exception of a loin cloth, while his jetty skin was marked symbolically with white streaks and patches to represent a skeleton.

At first Harry could scarcely believe that this was death; but from a hideous cleft in the black's temple the blood slowly oozed, and as, with starting eyes,

Harry gazed on, he could see the limbs beginning to assume the rigidity of the corpse.

But another howl from the dog aroused Harry, and again stepping forward, there, in the long grass, but still breathing, lay the convict, his left temple battered in by the savage's knoberry, while piercing him through and through was the long slender spear which the natives throw with such unerring aim, and to so great a distance.

"Good God, Lot! how was this?" cried Harry, for the poor fellow unclosed his eyes as the hound began to growl fiercely, and laid himself across the dead savage's breast.

"Run, sir—run for your life; there must be more in hiding," whispered the man, faintly. "I was chopping—thinking—old home—came through me like a flash." As he spake his hand closed upon the spear haft; and then, trying to raise himself upon one arm, and gasping and speaking hurriedly, he continued, "I turned—to run—this devil made at me with his club. I don't know now—how I did it; but as he hit at me I made one chop with the axe, and then staggered—and—Ah!"

Harry had dropped upon one knee, and supported the poor fellow's head, bewildered almost with horror, and wondering whether he could bear the man to the tent, when he suddenly dropped the head and leaped to his feet, as with whistling noise and quivering handle another spear, probably aimed at himself, struck the convict in the neck, piercing it in an instant, and with a wild cry he fell dead.

To catch up his rifle and fire a couple of shots in the direction from whence the spear was thrown was with Harry Clayton but the work of a moment; and then he turned and ran for the unfinished hut, followed by the dog, howling and snarling, with a spear sticking through the skin of its hind leg, and the long haft trailing upon the ground.

It was a short run of about a hundred yards, with terror goading him; and twice as he brushed by a low bough he leaped convulsively, thinking that a spear had passed within an inch of his body. But he reached the hut in safety, shouted to the boys, who, alarmed by the cry and gunshots, were standing wonderingly by the tent, and then they quickly joined him, and prepared to help to barricade the open door, over which Harry stood guard with his revolver.

But as he stood gazing anxiously out towards the wood, Harry Clayton's hand dropped to his side, and a horrible feeling of dread and despair seized upon him; for happening to drop his eyes for an instant upon his pistol to see if it were well capped, he found that the first nipple was bare, and upon turning the chambers, every nipple was the same, when he remembered that the arm was not loaded, having been discharged and cleaned a day or two before.

There was plenty of powder in the tent, about forty yards away from where they stood in the hut; but who would dare to fetch it, when only a few yards farther on, and concealed by the bushes through which they had crawled, there might be perhaps a score of blacks waiting for some object at which to direct their spears, and that object would no doubt be the first person who ventured to show himself beyond the wooden walls of the hut?

In dread enough he was respecting his own fate, and

that of the boys by his side; but now came the recollection of the dangerous position of the men, who, ignorant of the state of things at the station, might at any moment run headlong into the peril awaiting them.

"Let me go, sir," exclaimed one of the boys, on learning the difficulty.

"No, no; let me go, sir," cried the other—"I'm only a little 'un, and they wouldn't hurt me."

"No, sir, let me go, please. I spoke first. I could duck down, and they wouldn't be able to hit me," said the other.

But Harry Clayton's was not a nature to make him turn one of the lads into a scapegoat; so, after a long and careful examination, he prepared for the venture himself, by making an attempt to reach the ammunition.

Laying down rifle and pistol, he tightened his belt, and ran quickly across the open space and into the tent.

To get hold of another revolver and thrust it into his belt—to catch up cartridges, powder horn and bullet pouch—was but the work of a few seconds, while with another rifle from the tent, he ran again for the hut, and passed through the doorway almost at the same time as a spear darted through the opening, and quivered in the wooden wall behind.

There was plenty of wood inside, the half-finished door being one of the rough fragments, when, carefully avoiding any exposure, they contrived to partly close the opening, forming a shield, against which another spear came with a dull heavy thud ere they had finished. Then, with hands trembling with excitement, Harry proceeded to load the two rifles.

More than one grain of powder was spilled in the operation, for the young man's nerves were shaken, and it was only by an effort that he could retain his composure sufficiently to encourage the boys who were his companions.

But at last rifles and pistols were loaded, and the lads on the watch at the two windows—one armed with a rifle, the other with the revolver and spear he had dragged out of the woodwork.

Then came time for giving a thought to the wounded; for feeling for the poor brute's pain, and knowing that he would prove a valuable auxiliary in a close encounter, Harry bent down over the dog, and with his knife slit the animal's skin sufficiently to allow the spear to be withdrawn—the poor brute merely whimpering, and licking the hand that dressed its wound and bound it with a handkerchief.

"Here they come, sir," suddenly cried one of the boys.

And seizing his rifle, Harry Clayton leaped to his feet.

The boy's warning was needed; for, as his master darted to one of the window openings, some twenty or thirty blacks made their appearance, came slowly and guardedly towards the building, paused for a few seconds, and then there was a shout as half a dozen spears stuck quivering in the side.

Loth to spill blood, and excited to a degree, Harry checked the boys, who would both have fired, and hesitated himself, in the hope that the blacks would retire; but they came nearer and nearer, and feeling at last that safety depended upon his prompt action, he levelled his rifle and fired.

As might have been expected of a man who had never before fired a shot in anger, he missed his aim, when a loud shout of triumph rose from the black mob, who came nearer, howling and brandishing their long spears, and making a din that was deafening, the streaks of white paint which showed vividly on their black skins in the rays of the moon, by this time high in the heavens, giving them a grotesquely hideous appearance.

There was no room now for hesitation, as, recalling all the horrors of the mutilations and barbarities perpetrated by the savages on those within their power, Harry whispered to the lads to take good aim and fire low; then, following out his own precept, he discharged his piece, when two of the attacking party fell, and the rest ran howling back to the cover of the woods, where once more all was silent.

If Harry Clayton's hand had trembled before, it now shook violently, as, retired though he was from the opening, he still seemed to be gazing upon the body of the man he had slain. But he reloaded his rifle, and then stood watching the border of the wood, seeing in every tree trunk the naked body of a black, with its streaks and bars of paint; while once more, in the midst of this suspense, came the thought of his men, though in the excitement he could not recall whether they were armed or not. Could he but have found some means of warning them, he would not, he felt, care; but unless the shouts and noise of the firing had that effect, he greatly feared that the natives would take them by surprise—creeping round to the side by which they would come, and sending in a volley of death-dealing spears before the alarm could be given. Then came the thought of how dreadful it would be to remain there alone, deprived of the support of his men, even if he escaped with his own life; and the young man's heart sank as he thought of such an ending to the day.

"Why could he not be left unmolested by the savages?" he thought—"he had sought to do them no ill."

And now it was with a feeling of almost grim satisfaction that he glanced at the two poor wretches lying some twenty yards from the hut.

But he shuddered directly after, as he thought again of his men. Certainly they had Jerry with them, and by means of his wondrous instinct he might be able to scent the danger from afar, and so warn them; but even then, if unarmed, the blacks would quietly track them, and spear them one by one.

Half the tales of the native atrocities he had set down as being simply inventions; but he now plainly saw the truth of all that had been told, and vainly sought for a way out of the deadly peril.

Hour after hour he now watched on, but the blacks did not show themselves, though an occasional faint cry or howl from beneath the trees showed that their enemies were still there; and every moment he expected to see the men come straggling homeward.

The boys again offered willingly to take their chance of finding the men, and running to give the alarm; but Harry knew that it would be to the boys' destruction—perhaps to that of the men, for the blacks would certainly run them down; and at last, weary of trying to form plans, he stood at the open window firing one barrel of his rifle at five minutes' intervals in the direc-

tion of his enemies, and more than once causing a stir and shifting of quarters amongst the savages.

"It will give them warning," thought Harry; and after a time he almost felt hopeful that his plan had been successful in a way upon which he had not counted, and driven the savages from their leafy stronghold.

"Shout loudly by way of warning," said Harry to the boys, "and I'll fire a couple of shots at the same time as they come in sight."

Then he altered his plan, and laying aside his rifle, prepared to commence pulling down the barricade directly the men appeared, and then to try and cover their retreat, as he called loudly to them to hurry under cover.

"But they will not want any hurrying," said Harry, grimly.

And then twenty times over he regretted not taking old Joe's advice, and settling within reach of help from at least one station, feeling that he was answerable for the safety of all his following; and as he thought of the home he might never more see, he cursed his folly for coming so far up the country. He had been warned of the danger, but had derided it when there was so rich a temptation as unlimited land to be taken almost at will; and besides, he had been eager to win and hold an independency for the sake of her who even now seemed to be looking sorrowfully down upon him.

At last he had a warning of the appearance of his men in seeing two or three of the blacks steal gently across an opening in the direction from whence he expected to see his shepherd and men return, when feeling that he must warn them, and that his shots might just as well remove an enemy from their path, he waited till he saw the next black stealing across the opening, when, taking careful aim, he fired, and the man sprang high in the air, to fall out of sight beneath the bushes.

Another savage shared the same fate, and Harry was in the act of reloading, when one of the boys fired from his window at a knot of four, when one dropped and began to crawl farther out into the open, but only to roll over the next moment and lie quite still.

Then there was a loud shout and a rush, the sound of a couple of shots, when the old shepherd and one of the convicts, followed by Jerry, rushed into the hut, making for it instinctively as a place of safety, while the other man lay quivering upon the ground between the hut and the tent, with a couple of spears in his body.

BLACK COOKERY.—In the course of time I had any little squeamishness or prejudice that I had brought with me from England rubbed off by negligences on the part of the black cooks in Africa. I once found a fine cutting of a big toe-nail on a beefsteak; another time, a round head with a beak and large eyes, and a body of an indistinct and cloudy nature, in a rice pudding, from a half-hatched egg having been stirred into it in its manufacture; and in a roast fowl I was disappointed in cutting open what I fondly thought was its stuffed breast, to find that it was the poor hen's crop, full of Indian corn, cockroaches, and a fine centipede. I also once saw my cook at Ambriz making some forcemeat balls quite round and smooth by rolling them with the palm of his hand on his naked stomach.—*Montero's Angola.*

Mr. Pash's Courtship.

CHAPTER VI.—HARD-HEARTED.

TIME glided on.

"You've come again, then?" said Keziah Bay.

"Yes, I've come again," said Mr. Peter Pash. "Trade's very brisk, Keziah."

"Is it?" said that lady, in the most indifferent of tones.

"Yes, things are looking up well," said Mr. Pash, "and my lodger has dropped dips, and taken to composites. You know what that means, of course?"

"Not I," said Keziah, indifferently. "I don't trouble my head about such things."

"You're always a-snubbing me, Keziah," said the little man, dolefully. "It's no good for me to try and please you."

"Not a bit," said Keziah, with a smile. "You ought to know better than to come wherrittin' me when there's so much trouble in the house."

"But it aint our trouble," said Peter Pash. "Why, if I was to make myself unhappy about other folks's candles, where should I be? Now, I say, Keziah dear, when's it to be?"

"Once for all, I tell you," said Keziah, "that until I see poor Miss May happily settled, I won't bother about that nonsense; so you may hold your tongue, for I can see what you mean."

Peter Pash gave a great groan of despair, but the next minute he was patiently submitting to a severe cross-examination concerning the habits and customs of his lodger, Frank Marr.

"He's no good, Peter," said Keziah at last, "and the sooner you get rid of him the better."

"But he pays his rent very regular," said Peter, "and that's a consideration, you know. And he's a good son, and pays no end of attention to his mother. And I say, Keziah dear, I've seen Mr. Brough, and I aint a bit jealous now."

Keziah snorted.

"He's been twice to my place to see Mr. Marr, and they're the best of friends; and he tells me it was only his fun, and Mr. Marr don't seem to mind it a bit. And I say, Keziah dear, now that Miss May is really going to get married and settled, sha'n't we make it right now?"

"Now I tell you what it is, young man," said Keziah, fiercely; "I hate the very name of marrying, and if you say another word to me about it, I'll never have you at all. When I want to be married I'll ask you, and not before, so now be off."

"But will you want to some day?" said Peter, pitifully.

"Perhaps I shall, and perhaps I sha'n't; I'm seeing enough of it to satisfy me, so I tell you."

Peter groaned.

"Now don't make that noise there," cried Keziah, snappishly. "If you can't behave yourself, you'd better go."

"I won't do so any more, dear!" said Peter, softly. "How's poor dear Miss May?"

"O, don't ask me—poor lamb!" cried Keziah.

"It is to be, isn't it?" said Peter.

"To be! Yes. They've talked her into it, now that your fine Mr. Marr has proved himself such a good-

for-nothing. It's to be, sure enough, and I wish them all joy of what they've done. They're killing her between them, and then they'll be happy. Get married! There, don't drive me wild, Peter Pash, but be off out of my sight, for I hate the very sound of the word, and don't you come here any more till I ask you."

Peter Pash groaned; and then rising, he departed in a very disconsolate state of mind, for he considered himself to be far more worthy of pity than May Richards.

CHAPTER VII.—MAY'S MARRIAGE.

THE wedding day, and for once in a way, a crisp, bright, hearty, frosty time—cold, but inspiring; and at ten o'clock, pale and trembling, but nerved for her trial, May Richards stood suffering Keziah to give the finishing touches to her dress before starting for the church. There was to be no form; May had stipulated for that. The wedding was to be at an old City church hard by, and in place of meeting her there, Tom Brough had arrived, and was in the dining-room talking to old Richards bound to an easy-chair with gout, and too ill to think of going to the church.

As May entered at last, led in by Keziah, defiant and snorting, Tom Brough, active as a young man, hurried to meet the trembling girl, caught her in his arms, and kissed her fondly, heedless of the sigh she gave.

"Don't look like that, my darling," he whispered. "I'm going to make you happy as the day is long."

May's only reply was a look so full of misery and despair, that Keziah put her apron to her eyes and ran out of the room.

For a moment there was a shade as of uneasiness crossed old Richards' face—it might have been a twinge of gout—but it passed on the instant.

"Don't look like that, May!" he exclaimed, angrily. "If you don't know what is for your good, you must be taught. Now, Brough, time's going—get it over, man. She'll be happier as soon as you have her away."

"Yes, yes," said Tom Brough, tenderly. "Come, May, my child, have you not one look for me?"

May placed her hands in his, and looked up in his face with the faintest dawning of a smile upon her lip, and this time she did not shrink back when he kissed her forehead, but hung upon his arm as if resigned to her fate; the sound of wheels was heard in the narrow street; the friends ready to accompany them were summoned from the room below—two old friends of Mr. Brough's, for old Richards had—as he often boasted—no friends; May was led out, the door was heard to close, wheels rattled away, and then, for a wonder, there fell a dead silence upon Walbrook, one which seemed to affect old Richards, even as he sat there looking haggard and drawn of feature, thinking of the past, and of the day he wed his own wife long before gold had become his care—almost his god. For the first time remorse had seized upon him, and it wanted not the words of Keziah Bay, who now entered the room, for reproach to be heaped upon his head.

But Keziah's words were not fierce now, only the words of sorrow; and at last she sank down sobbing before him, and said:

"Oh, Master Richards—Master Richards—what have you done?"

He did not turn round fiercely to bid her begone, but shrank from her, farther and farther into his great, roomy chair; and at that moment, could he have done so, he would have arrested the further progress of the ceremony, for remorse was beating strongly at his heart.

But the time was passed now, and with him action was impossible. He sat there motionless, listening to the sobs of his old servant till nearly an hour had passed, when suddenly Keziah rose, wiping her eyes, and saying,

"I hadn't the heart to go and see it, and now it is too late!"

"Yes, yes," said old Richards, softly, "it is now too late!"

The next moment Keziah was hurrying from the room, for there was the sound of wheels and a heavy knocking at the door, which she opened to admit old Tom Brough, red and excited; and his first act upon the door being closed was to catch Keziah round the waist, to hug her and give her a sounding kiss before waltzing her down the passage, she struggling the while till she got free, and stood panting, trembling, and boiling over with ire.

"It's all right, 'Ziah!" he exclaimed—"the knot's tied!"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, that you ought," panted Keziah, darting away to avoid another embrace. "And pray, where's Miss May?"

Tom Brough did not answer, he only hurried into the drawing-room, where old Richards sat upright, holding on by the arms of his chair.

"Where's May?" he gasped, looking ashy pale; "why have you not brought her back?"

"Because she was not mine to bring," said Tom Brough, coolly. "Frank Marr waylaid me, and he's carried her off and married her."

"Brough! this is a plot, and you are in it," exclaimed old Richards, fiercely, as he saw the serio-comic smile upon his friend's countenance.

"Well, yes, I had a little to do with it," Brough said, quietly.

"And is dear Miss May really married to Mr. Frank?" cried Keziah.

"Silence, woman!" roared old Richards. "Brough, I'll never forgive you. You've planned all this with that beggar, and he has swindled me out of a thousand pounds, and robbed me of my child. A rascally, lying beggar!"

"Gently, gently, my dear Richards," said Tom Brough, coolly. "I don't think that now I have taken him into partnership he is quite the beggar you imagine. What with that and your thousand, and what we—we, friend Richards, will leave them when we die, I don't think there will be many men hold up their heads much higher in the City than Frank Marr. On the whole, I think your child has done well."

"Brough, Brough," exclaimed old Richards, excitedly, "what does this all mean? In God's name, tell me, or I shall have a fit!"

"In God's name," said Tom Brough, slowly and reverently, "it means that I, blessed with wealth, could not commit the grievous sin you wished against that sweet child. I loved her too well to condemn her to such a fate, and Frank Marr found me more open to appeal than he did his father-in-law. I told him to

come again to your office when he had been to me, and at my wish he accepted all your terms, though not without a deal of forcing on my part. He's a fine, noble-hearted young fellow, Richards, and, listening to me, I tried to make matters work for the good of us all."

He looked at old Richards as he spoke, but the old man was scowling at the wall.

"Would you have murdered your child, Richards?" said Tom Brough. "I tell you, man, that had your will been law, the poor girl would not have lived a year; while now, with the husband she loves, she is waiting to ask your forgiveness for that for which I am solely to blame."

"Keziah," said Mr. Brough, softly, after a pause, and he whispered a few words in her ear—words whose effect was to send her from the room, but only to return in ten minutes, followed by Frank Marr, leading in his trembling wife.

CHAPTER VIII.—CAN'T IT BE TO-MORROW?

THERE will doubtless be those ready to say that such things do not happen in real life—that rich men do not take poor men into partnership, nor yet give up handsome young wives on their wedding morn; but in spite of all that cynics may declare, there are men with hearts so large still to be found in this businesslike world of ours—men who are ready to do any good to benefit another. And there are times when people do perform very eccentric acts, in proof of which must be related what took place in Walbrook that same evening, at a time when there was a merry party in the drawing-room, and old Richards' face wore an expression that it had not worn for years. There came a ring at the door-bell—a sneaking, underhanded sort of ring; and on Keziah opening the door—behold Peter Pash!

"May I come in?" he said, modestly.

"Come in?—yes, man," cried Keziah, catching him by the coat, and giving him a snatch so that he was pulled into the passage, and the door banged behind him.

The next moment, to Peter's utter astonishment—for he was ignorant of the morning's changes—Keziah's arms were round his neck.

"Peter, dear, can't it be to-morrow?"

"What! will you have me, then?" cried the little man, in ecstasies; and the next moment there was the sound of such a kiss heard in that passage that it rolled along, vibrating from floorcloth to ceiling, and actually echoed; not that one would have recorded the fact, only this was such a tremendously big kiss, and one that echoes is really worthy of mention.

It could not "be to-morrow," but it happened very soon after, and Tom Brough gave away the bride; while, talk about illuminations, Peter Pash's house was a sight that drew together twelve small boys and an old woman, who stayed till the last dip went out and smelt unpleasant in the best room window; but it is not every man that can have an illumination at his own expense and of his own manufacture.

The gout proved too much for old Richards before another twelvemonth passed; but every one said that during the last year of his life he was another man.

THE END.

Things New and Old.

A New Article of Diet.

A report has been made by the Acting Political Superintendent, Akalkoit, to the Government of Bombay, stating that there exists in those parts a weed called "mulmunda," the seed of which is used for food by the poorer classes in times of scarcity. The seed is ground into flour, of which bread is made. The bread is said to be sweet in taste, and, although not quite so satisfying as could be desired, does very well to keep body and soul together at a pinch. It is also given to camels for forage. The result of an examination of the plant, which is of a leguminous description, by the acting chemical analyzer to the Government, shows that the seeds contain nearly as much nitrogenous substances as some of the chief varieties of Indian peas and beans; and hence the nutritive value of the seed should be taken as equivalent to any of the other leguminous grains. The weed is said to grow all over the Deccan and Southern Mahratta country.

Night by the Black Sea.

Being afraid to hobble my horse on such ground (the hillside being at an angle of 45 degrees), and equally afraid to tether him, I blocked up the path behind him, at a narrow place between two rocks, by felled saplings, and tied a double rope across; then, setting fire to an old touchwood stump above the path, to keep off the wolves, &c., we left him, and went on to the hut in the gorge, lit a fire, ate some damper, and turned in, after the usual screech-owl concert, but could not sleep. The solitude and gloom, after so many accidents in this valley, began to make me apprehensive that there was something "uncanny" about it, and that we should not get out of it ourselves. This was doubtless partly the effects of fever and ague, combined with overwork and insufficient food; but I had suffered all three on other occasions, without experiencing the same feelings. The baying of the wolves, who were eating the dead horses 150 yards off, sounded particularly unpleasant, especially when the fire was burnt down after midnight. These animals are here about the size of a mastiff, very bold, and sometimes dangerous. The howling of a troop of jackals is heavenly music to their performances; I never heard anything which gave one such a correct idea of the pack of the Wild Huntsman, and feel convinced that they originated the story. By the way, if you happen to be any distance from camp at nightfall in these mountains, you begin to comprehend why none of the Russians, Moldavians, or Mingrelians care about going into the interior. When it is dark above, it is pitch dark under the trees, and the trees are everywhere; this, as all sky line, &c., is out of the question, begins to make you uncertain of the direction. Then the way you are tripped up now and then by unseen thorns growing like creepers, and unseen creepers hanging like ropes, tends to flurry you, and, added to the screech-owls hooting within thirty or forty feet, the rustling of unseen bears and wolves, &c., gives you a notion that the god Pan is not dead hereabouts (in fact, the Tcherkess and Abkhasians worshipped him, or somebody closely related to him, till quite lately).

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER XXIV.—AN INTERVIEW WITH BARNEY STURT.

"COULDN'T you make it a four-wheeler, Sam," said Mrs. Jenkles, one evening, "and take me up and bring us all back together?"

"Now, lookye here, old lady," said Sam, "I don't want to be hard, nor I don't want to be soft, but what I says is this here—Where's it going to end?"

"What *do* you mean, Sam?" exclaimed Mrs. Jenkles.

"What I says, my dear—Where's it going to end? You've got over me about the money, and you've got over me about the lodgings. You're allus going to Mrs. Lane to tea, as I knows they don't find; and now you wants me to give up my 'ansom, borra a four-wheeler, and lose 'bout a pound as I should make in fares; and what I says is—Where's it going to end?"

"Sam, Sam, Sam," said Mrs. Jenkles, "when did you ever go out with your cab for about a couple of hours and make a pound?"

Sam stood rubbing his nose, and there was a droll twinkle in his eye as he replied:

"Well, I might make a pound, you know."

"Now don't talk stuff, Sam, but go to the yard and change your cab, take me up there, and bring us all back comfortable."

"You're a-going it, you are, missus," said Sam. "That's the way—order your kerridge. 'Sam,' says you, 'the kerridge at six.' 'Yes, mum,' says I. 'Op'ery or dinner party?' 'Only to make a hevening call, Sam,' says you. 'Werry good, mum,' says I."

"If you want me to go up there by myself, Sam, and fetch them, I'll go, and we can get back somehow by the 'bus; but I thought you'd like to come up and see that those ladies and your wife weren't insulted."

"I should jest like to catch anybody at it, that's all," said Sam, sharply.

"I didn't mean to say anything, Sam," continued Mrs. Jenkles; "for I thought if we'd got such a man as you with us, no one would dare to interfere."

"Now, look here," said Sam, "I never did come across such an old snail as you are, missus; I like the allus being at home part of it, but it's the hiding as I don't like. Now, look here, I never does nothing without coming and telling you all about it; and as for you, why, you've allus got something in the way for me to find out."

"What's the use of me bothering you with trifles, Sam, when you've got plenty of troubles on your mind? I would tell you if it was anything you need know."

"Well, come now, what's it all mean 'bout Miss Lane?" said Sam.

"Only, dear, that since those people have found that Mrs. Lane meant to leave, they've turned very strange, and the poor child's quite frightened and timid like."

"Now, why couldn't you say so at first," said Sam, "instead of dodging and hiding, and making a blind man's buffer of me? That's it, is it? Mr. Barney of the betting ring—'Ten to one bar one'—means to be nasty, does he? Well, all I've got to say is, just let him try it on, that's all!"

"Now, there it is," said Mrs. Jenkles; "that's just what I want to avoid. Tell you about it, and you want to do the very thing as will upset that poor girl; and oh! Sam, do be careful, she—"

Mrs. Jenkles added something in a whisper.

"I'll be careful enough," said Sam; "and look here—how long shall you be?"

"I'm ready now, Sam," said his wife.

"Yes, but I've got to go down to the yard, and get the keb changed; take me 'bout three-quarters of an hour, it will, and then I'm back."

Sam went off, muttering to himself; the only words audible being—

"Jest let him, that's all!"

And within the prescribed time he was driving Mrs. Jenkles up to Mrs. Lane's wretched lodgings.

Mrs. Jenkles passed in, after a word or two with her husband, and saw at a glance Barney of the black chin smoking in his shop, and Mrs. Barney looking over his shoulder. She took no notice of them, and went upstairs, to find Mrs. Lane looking very pale and much excited, holding Netta's hand.

"And how's my pretty to-night?" said Mrs. Jenkles, after a quick glance had passed between her and the mother.

"Quite—quite well," said the girl, placing both her hands in those of Mrs. Jenkles, and holding her face to be kissed; but her unnaturally bright eyes and flushed face contradicted her words, and she kept glancing timidly towards the door.

"That's right, my dear," said Mrs. Jenkles. "Ah! and I see you've got the trunk packed, and all ready. I've got some flannels for you at home, and everything waiting; so don't you go looking like that."

"She has been a little frightened to-day," said Mrs. Lane; "the people downstairs—"

"Oh, don't you mind them," said Mrs. Jenkles. "They don't like losing good lodgers, now it comes to the point, with all their grumbling. Have you paid your bit of rent?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Lane; and she glanced anxiously at her child, whose alarm seemed to increase.

"I see," said Mrs. Jenkles, in her most businesslike way. "Now, look here, the thing is to get it over quickly. Have you got everything there?" and she pointed to a trunk and carpet bag.

"Yes, everything," said Mrs. Lane.

"Then I'll call up Sam to take them down to the cab."

"No, no—stop!" exclaimed Netta. "Oh! mamma, had we not better stop? That man—what he said this morning!"

"There, there, my pretty," said Mrs. Jenkles, "don't you be alarmed. You leave it to me."

And going to the window, she signalled to Sam, who was busy tying knots in his shabby whip-thong.

As Mrs. Jenkles turned from the window, the door was thrown open, and Mrs. Sturt, looking very aggressive, entered the room, very closely followed by her lord, smoking his very black pipe of strong, rank tobacco.

Netta shrank timidly back into her seat, catching at her mother's hand, while the result of the tobacco smoke was to set her coughing painfully.

"Now, if you please," said Mrs. Sturt, "I want to know what this means?"

And she pointed to the trunk and the other manifest signs of departure.

"I told you a week ago, Mrs. Sturt, that we intended to leave," said Mrs. Lane, speaking with a forced calmness, as she pressed her child's hand encouragingly.

"And so you think a week's notice is enough after the way as we've been troubled to get our bit of rent?" said Mrs. Sturt, raising her voice. "Are we to be left with our place empty, after harbouring a pack of lodgers with no more gratitude than—than—than nothing?" continued the woman, at a loss for a simile.

"I have nothing to do with that," said Mrs. Lane, with dignity. "Mrs. Sturt, I have rigidly kept to the arrangement I made with you, and you have no right to expect more."

"Oh, haven't I?" said the woman. "Do you hear that, Barney? I'll just let 'em see?"

Barney growled, and showed his teeth.

"Look ye here," he said, hoarsely; "you aint a-going to leave here, so now then. And you, missus," turning to Mrs. Jenkles, "you're gallus clever, you are; but you may let your lodgings to some one else."

Netta's clutch of her mother's hand grew convulsive, and her face wore so horrified an expression that Mrs. Jenkles did not reply to the challenge directed at her, but stepped to the poor girl's side.

"Don't you be frightened, my dear," she whispered; and then to herself—"Why don't Sam come?"

"Mr. Sturt," said Mrs. Lane, firmly in voice, though she trembled as she spoke to the fellow, "you have no right to try and force us to stay if we wish to leave."

"Oh! aint I," said Barney. "I'll let you see about that. Here, give us that," he said, turning to snatch a paper from his wife's hand. "Let alone what he telled me, too, about yer—"

"He! Who?" exclaimed Mrs. Lane, excitedly.

And Netta started from her chair.

"Never you mind," said Barney, showing his great teeth in a grin. "You think I don't know all about you, now, don't you? But you're precious mistaken!"

"But tell me, man, has any one—"

"There, then it's all right, Mrs. Lane—you've got to stop here, that's what you've got to do. What have you got to say to that, for another thing?"

As Barney spoke, he thrust the paper down before Mrs. Lane, and went on smoking furiously.

"What's this? I don't owe you anything," said Mrs. Lane, whose courage seemed failing.

"Don't owe us anything, indeed!" said Mrs. Sturt, in her vinegary voice; "why, there's seven pun' ten, and seven for grosheries!"

"Oh! this is cruel as it's scandalous and false!" cried Mrs. Lane, in reply to Mrs. Jenkles's look. "I do not owe a shilling."

"Which you do—there!" cried Mrs. Sturt; "and not a thing goes off these premises till it's paid."

"And they don't go off, nor them nayther, when it is paid," said Barney, grinning offensively. "So now, Mrs. What's-er-name, you'd better be off!"

Mrs. Jenkles had been very quiet, but her face had been growing red and fiery during all this, and she gave a sigh of relief as she patted Netta on the shoulder; for at that moment Sam came slowly into the room, closed the door, and bowed and smiled to Mrs. Lane and her daughter.

"Sam," said Mrs. Jenkles; and then she stopped

almost aghast at her husband's proceedings, for with a sharp flourish of the hand he knocked Barney's pipe from his mouth, the stem breaking close to his teeth, and he looking perfectly astonished at the cabman's daring.

"What are yer smoking like that for, here? Can't yer see it makes the young lady cough?"

"I'll—" exclaimed Barney, rushing at Sam menacingly; and Netta uttered a shriek.

"Don't you mind him, miss," said Sam, laughing, "it's only his fun. It's a little playful way he's got with him, that's all. Which is the boxes?"

"That trunk, and the carpet bag, Sam," said Mrs. Jenkles; and Sam advanced to them.

"Haden't we better give up?" said Mrs. Lane, pitifully; and she glanced at Netta, who trembled violently.

"I should think not, indeed," said Mrs. Jenkles. "Don't you be afraid—they daren't stop you."

"But we just dare," said Mrs. Sturt, furiously. "Not a thing goes off till my bill's paid."

"And they don't go off when it is! now then," said Barney.

"Don't let him touch those things," said Mrs. Sturt.

"Sam, you take that trunk down directly," said Mrs. Jenkles. "Now, my dear; come along!"

"All right," said Sam, and he advanced to the trunk; but Barney pushed himself forward, and sat down upon the box; while, as Mrs. Jenkles placed her arm round Netta, and led her towards the door, Mrs. Sturt jerked herself to it, and placed her back against the panels.

"You're a nicet 'un, you are, Barney Sturt, Esquire, of the s'burban races," said Sam, good-temperedly; "but it aint no good, so get up, and let's go quietly."

Barney growled out an oath, and showed his teeth, as Mrs. Lane came up to Sam, and laid her hand on his shoulder.

"Thank you much," she said, with a shudder; "but I give up: we cannot go."

"Believe you can't?" said Barney, grinning. "D'yer hear that, cabby?"

"Yes, I hear," said Sam, gruffly; "and if it weren't that I don't want to make a row before the ladies, I'd have you off that trunk afore you knew where you was. And as to leaving the box alone, man, my missus said I was to take it down to the keb. Is it to go, old lady?"

"Yes, certainly," said Mrs. Jenkles, with flashing eyes.

"Now, Barney, d'yer hear?" said Sam.

"Who do you call Barney? You don't know me," said he.

"Oh, no," said Sam; "I don't know you. I didn't give yer a lift in my 'ansom, and drive yer away when at 'Ampton, when the mob had torn yer clothes into rags for welching, and they was going to pitch yer in the Thames, eh?"

Barney scowled, and shuffled about on his seat.

"Now, then," said Sam; "are you going to get up?"

"No," said Barney.

"Mrs. Jenkles, pray end this scene!" exclaimed Mrs. Lane, pitifully—"for her sake," she added, in a whisper.

"I'll end it, mum," said Sam.

And he gave a sharp whistle, with the result that the door was opened so violently that Mrs. Sturt was jerked

forward against Sam, the cause being a policeman, who now stood in the entry, with the further effect that Barney leaped off the trunk, and stood looking aghast.

Mrs. Jenkles gave a sigh of relief, and a gratified look at her husband.

"Here's the case, policeman," said Sam. "Ladies here wants to leave these lodgings: they've given notice and paid their rent; but the missus here brings out a bill for things as the lady says she's never had, and wants to stop their boxes. It's county court, aint it? They can't stop the clothes?"

"Nobody wants to stop no boxes," said Barney, uneasily. "Only it was precious shabby on 'em going like this."

"Then you don't want to stop the boxes, eh?" said Sam.

Mrs. Sturt gave her husband a sharp dig with her elbow.

"Be quiet, can't you!" he snarled; and then to Sam, "'Course I don't."

"Then ketch hold o' t'other end," said Sam, placing the bag on the trunk.

And like a lamb Barney helped to bear his late lodger's *impedimenta* downstairs, and then to place them on the cab, as Mrs. Jenkles led Netta half fainting from the room.

Five minutes after, Sam had banged to the rattling door, shutting in the little party, climbed to his box, and settled himself in his place, with a good-humoured nod to the policeman, who stood beating his gloves together, while Barney stood at the side of his wife.

"Here's the price of a pint for you, Barney," said Sam, throwing him a couple of pence—money which Barney instantly secured; and then, vowing vengeance against the donor, he slunk off in the opposite direction; but only to double round by a back street, and track the cab like a dog, till he saw it set down its inmates at the humble little home of Mrs. Jenkles.

The Man in the Open Air.

ALTHOUGH the gun is now presumed to retire into its case, so far as game (so recognized) is concerned, the gunner who possesses the benefit of the proper quarters may be seen quietly stealing along the margins of the moss-soddened tributaries of our larger rivers and lakes, and bringing down here and there a woodcock or a snipe—for these birds, which so liberally impart such a delicious flavour to toast, are considered legitimate objects of pursuit as long as they remain with us. It is a curious fact, but nevertheless true, that woodcocks, although they come in countless flights, return to the north in pairs, doing our islands, in the meantime, the compliment of making them the land of courtship and matrimony. Thus it may be said that the woodcock spends his honeymoon previous to marriage, and, indeed, will prolong his stay with us, if the weather be severe, during February or well into March. He is then found in the woods and covers; but if the days are genial will get out in the more open parts, and he affects those places the most that are near the sea-shore. Woodcocks have been known to breed in this country, which circumstance is supposed to be exceptional, and is attributed to their having been wounded by accident or the sportsman

sufficiently to deprive them of the power of making their way over the trackless waste of the waters to the high latitudes of the north.

It is certainly very remarkable that snipe may be in hundreds—nay, thousands—in a district one day, and that the next a single bird is not to be seen. This would bear out the opinion of naturalists that most, if not all, birds of passage shift their quarters in the night. But snipe do not require to be winged with shot to stay with us, as it is not at all uncommon to find their nests in our fens and marshes. Indeed, in the Isle of Man they breed numerous.

There is a feeling gaining ground that hares should not be hunted at all during the month of February, instead of that sport being carried on till the 27th. This opinion arises from the doe hares being generally then in a state of gestation, and the sentiment of humanity may be taken as a symptom of the progress of refinement, and an aversion to cruelty.

What boy, particularly if he was "brought up" at Westminster, does not hail Shrove Tuesday?—which, belonging to the day and not to the date, we beg to say, in spite of "Old Moffat," cannot fall on a Wednesday. Pancakes then are being tossed, and it requires no little art to do this cleverly, or, like parched peas, they would soon be out of the frying pan into the fire. This forebodes bad luck for the rest of the year.

By the bye, are we, with our presumed advance of enlightenment, shaking off our old superstitions, or do they cling to us like the one parasite that affects the pike—sticking the closer to it the more healthy and active the fish becomes? The salmon gets rid of these profitless passengers or "stowaways" when he enters salt water; and perhaps it would be well for us if, when we go down to the seaside, we could throw off the prejudices of our brain before taking a header. Who does not know men who, if passing under a ladder, will spit, for luck, through the spokes? Such men, we must admit, can "see a hole through a ladder;" but yet, with the implied wisdom, they are amenable to this prejudice. Now let us see how this may have gained ground. To pass under a ladder is to run the chance of a slop of paint or whitewash, or, what is equally ridiculously serious, to have a small-sized brick through the crown of your hat, or half a yard of coping stone lodged for temporary conveyance on your shoulder. Yet why stop to spit between the rounds of a ladder, when there is danger ahead? The same process is gone through by persons taking a handsel coin, and to ensure luck when a piebald horse is seen. Then, who does not know some old lady who keeps the dried tip of a neat's tongue amongst the miscellaneous oddities of her ample pocket? Who, if illness is in the house, can hear the thrice repeated howling of a dog without the shadow of a shudder; or see a curl of wax down the side of a taper without a whispering thought of that old nurse who was half cordial and the other half fortune-telling cards? There's a thief in the candle, and we hasten to see that all locks and bolts are secure. There's a spark in the wick, and the postman offends us if next morning he passes our door without delivering the expected letter. Then, who has learned to treat the good news of bubbles on our tea with disrespect, or is regardless of the morsel of twig (probably a bit of birch broom) that floats like a miniature argosy upon the surface of our Bohea? We might just as well cast a new-

comer from our door as treat this "stranger" with disrespect. Who has not cured the cramp by making garters of the skins of eels, or put defiance to nightmare by hanging up his stocking crosswise? Let your ear itch, and some one is talking of you; your cheek burn, and you are to be kissed before night. It is true that in one county this is reversed; there to be vexed your nose must itch—enough, you will say, to confirm the fact; but let your right eye (it must be the right) itch, you will have a surfeit of good fortune; if the left, you will be as tired of sorrow as you need wish. No, you must not give a knife away for fear of cutting friendship—but you may sell it; and as a pair of scissors cut as well as knives (fol the riddle, &c.), you must e'en turn tradesman and sell this Sheffield ware. But what think you would be your fate if you gave a light to another between Christmas and Twelfth Night? Pray don't ask. Many years ago—then but a wee boy—we were looked upon as a "gone coon" for handing with the tongs a glowing coal to an old game-keeper wherewith to light his pipe. Our ancient aunt saw the act, and we were out of her cupboard sweets for the whole term. Then, think of a black cat crossing your path! Better return than proceed, although it may be to meet your bride at the church porch; or to see a solitary magpie, and, worse still, four—for then even the piece of coffin you cherish amongst your valuables will not keep you from grief and black crape. You may then go and spill salt at pleasure, in vain nail a horseshoe over or under your portal, turn your chair to alter bad luck at cards, or attempt to escape the fate of the gas-burst coal that fell at your feet. But there is a balm in Gilead while the rowan tree exists, and a bad coin is in your purse. Shake your money when you see the new moon; but you must not do so through glass. And, above all things, keep a pound in your pocket, and that will keep out a certain sable individual; in other words, as money makes money, a guinea will always bring luck.

But, more wondrous still. We had occasion, but a few days ago, to call upon a lady who keeps a school, and possesses a well-earned reputation of training children rather to love learning than to dread it—whose pupils are emulous to be first in attendance, and would almost consider it a pleasure than otherwise to be "kept" after hours. This is no exaggeration, but an additional touch of the present evidence of superstition. The parents of these children, upon their first calling upon the schoolmistress, are shown into a parlour, over the mantel glass of which are some peacocks' feathers tastefully arranged. She assures us that nearly every one of the mothers, upon first noticing these beautiful objects from the tail of Juno's bird, are more or less surprised—indeed, in some instances shocked. "What, have peacocks' feathers in your house!" they exclaim. "Why, they are the most unlucky things in nature." "Why?" has been the question; and the reply has been invariably to the effect that it is because they are. These mothers and grandmothers thought so, and they knew that misfortune invariably attended a household which this "feathered eye" looks upon. We were inclined to doubt the existence of this absurdity, and have made further inquiry in Surrey (here close at the threshold of enlightened London), and find surprise expressed that we had never heard of it before, some few of our "intelligent" neighbours vouching for the truth-

fulness of the fact, and quite ready to give numerous—nay, overwhelming—instances of bad luck and ill fortune having befallen those families who persisted in having the plume over their grates.

G. F.

Our Spelling Bee.

EVEN our little, quiet, humdrum seaport of Kirkham is smitten with the Spelling Bee mania, and, in spite of the direful forebodings of our village oracle, old Thompson, an old sea-dog in a chronic state of bile, has successfully held its first Bee, a chronicle of which may, perhaps, prove of interest.

Like Margate, we boast of a Hall by the Sea, which, on the eventful evening, was well filled. The list of competitors was long, and comprising, as it did, an admixture of gentle and simple, young and old of both sexes, promised to afford a capital evening's amusement—a promise fulfilled to the letter. The competitors were divided into two classes, with three prizes for each. The first consisted of youngsters, of ages from eight to fourteen years, and the other of competitors beyond the latter age.

I may here remark that the committee—of which I was a humble member—had a long discussion as to what course should be adopted in the matter of reference—whether to use one dictionary as a standard, or allow a competitor to produce an authority for his or her spelling of any word disputed. My opinion was in favour of the latter; but as the many incongruities in the numberless dictionaries were pointed out, and the confusion which would result therefrom, "Nuttall" was decided upon as our standard.

After a short explanatory address from our rector, who was president and referee, the ordeal commenced with the first class; the words chosen being simple and suitable, but terrible posers for the more rustic of the competitors. The first to cause a hearty roar of laughter was a youthful aspirant of the female sex, who insisted upon adding an extra "l" to *girl*, while another, of the opposite sex, rivalled this by spelling *boy*, "bor" (Suffolk vernacular). Not to be outdone, a sharp-looking little urchin informed us that *dog* was spelt "dawg."

Now a pretty dark-eyed little girl was prostrated with *weeping*, and as there was a general titter through the room, she sought consolation in a gentle tear, which prompted the interrogator to give the word *tear*, which was correctly accomplished; but *tear*, to rend, was too much for the next. *Seas*, explained as referring to the ocean, was spelt "seize"; *chair* as "cheer," *cheer* being next given as "chair," the speller being at once metaphorically sat upon by the audience. A little damsel hereupon put an "e" to *hook*, all eyes being upon her. Another was bowled out with *bowel*. *Shrewd* puzzled the wits of another.

One particularly bright-orbed little angel, who had hitherto soared along in safety, had her wings clipped by spelling *angel*, "angle." Another was weeded out with *hoe*; and by the indignant look of another he evidently felt himself unhandsonely treated upon being ruled out through leaving out "d" in *handsome*, and stood up for his rights, asserting that he had seen it so spelt on the cabs in London.

Many other amusing scenes occurred, causing the audience to be convulsed with laughter. The competitors were now considerably thinned, and the next round further reduced them to four, and, as there were three prizes, the excitement amongst them became intense. The first succeeded with some hesitation in getting over *gait*; the next, however, fell over *style*; but the remaining two were successful in marching off with *triumph* and *ease*.

Two more rounds resulted in the first prize falling to a little lady, the second and third to lads, and, amid cheers for the successful competitors, the first part concluded. After an interval of ten minutes, we proceeded with the second list of competitors, consisting of eight ladies and twenty-one gentlemen.

The first to succumb was a gentleman, who improperly spelt *propagate* "propergate." The plural of *family* was too much for another, who simply added an "s." He left the platform a much sadder, but most decidedly a wiser, man. The next to follow his route was a lady, who left out an "l" in *traveller*. *Obstacle* could not be surmounted by a gentleman, and *cater-waul* was too much for the nerves of another. A lady's career was now cut short by curtailing *lengthened*. A young lady who had been most prompt was now transported to the regions below by beginning *transportation* "tara."

Now followed a long spell of correct orthography—such words as *incapacity*, *uninformed*, *stimulate*, *incomparable*, *interrogate*, *rhubarb*, &c., meeting with but little difficulty; but a young lady demonstrated her fallibility with "infalibility," and one of the opposite sex looked ridiculous enough upon being ruled out with "ludicrously." *Inextinguishable* extinguished the chance of another, and it was quite clear from the hesitating manner in which a young fellow—who looked some "punkins," as our American friends express it—spelt *architectural*, if he had built his hopes on gaining a prize they would be cast down, as was ultimately the case, as he fell at *collapse*. A masculine of the marriageable age failed in *bachelor*, and a lady now committed self-destruction with *poignard*—her disappointment was keen. This was counterbalanced by two gentlemen quickly failing—one singeing his wings with *singleness*, giving it as "singelness," the other decapitated with *guillotine*.

There were now left but five competitors, and one lady lost her chance by being more partial to "i" than "e" in *putrefy*. She was quickly followed by a competitor who stumbled over *precipice*.

The fortunate ones now remaining were one lady and two gentlemen—one of the latter fell in the first round; and as the lady accomplished *bewitching* in the most fascinating manner, she was hailed as the winner of the first prize, amid a general clapping of hands and other demonstrations of satisfaction—the gentlemen, after another competition, receiving their well-earned second and third prizes.

The prizes, consisting of books, were then awarded to the successful candidates in each class; and after the usual vote of thanks to the rector for presiding, and mutual congratulations, our first Spelling Bee was a thing of the past.

Although but hastily organized, and many little *contretemps* occurring during the evening, yet, from the various expressions of approval from one and all, its

success was undoubted, and fully repaid the time and trouble spent upon it.

As a result, I may state that one old lady in the place is delighted with the institution, and says that her boy has improved since "wonderful." He always used to spell the cell-work of bees "wacks," but he always puts the "h" in now in its right place, after the "w."

A Critical Inspiration.

THE following lines were suggested by the notice which was given a short time since in the pages of ONCE A WEEK of Mr. Henry Lee's new natural history work, "The Octopus; or, the Devil Fish of Fiction and of Fact:"—

OCTOPUS REDIVIVUS; OR, THE DEVIL FISH RESTORED TO FAVOUR.

Old Horace pities many a king
Who lived ere Agamemnon's days,
Because no bard had learned to sing
And give to each his share of praise.

They lived and died, they fought and wed,
They went to grief or went to glory;
And no one knew that they were dead,
For none was there to tell the story.

So the Octopus passed his time—
Society got on without him;
No share had he in prose or rhyme,
For no one cared a rap about him.

But since Aquaria came to be,
Fate has been pleased to turn the tables;
For, thanks to Hugo and to Lee,
He's known in fact and known in fables.

He used to roam about our coasts
Unsung, unhonoured, and unknown;
But now the happy "devil" boasts
A literature of his own.

Each day the creature may be found
Admired by scientific gapers;
Then made, as Saturday comes round,
The cynosure of weekly papers.

The great Aquarium's cherished pet,
His waistcoat regularly lined;
Oh, what a happy squid to get
Biography and crabs combined!

Long may he fill his rocky holes,
And give his owners cause to bless him;
While Brighton visitors in shoals
Go to the "devil" and caress him!

WYKEHAMIST.

ELECTRIC SUBMERGED LAMP.—A balloon-shaped glass vessel, protected by a metal cage, is, according to the invention of Messrs. Chauvin, Goizet, and Aubry, of Paris, hermetically closed, preferably by an india-rubber plug. The plug is traversed by two metal rods isolated electrically. At the ends of these rods two ends of a platinum thread rolled into a spiral are fixed, which, when traversed by the electric current, is heated to incandescence and emits light. The generating pile is contained in a separate box, and conductors communicate the established current to the platinum thread.

Sketches of the Central Wilds.

BY A WALKING WALLABY.

V.—WAR TO THE KNIFE.

THERE was no need for explanation; the party could see well enough the perilous position in which they were placed, and the first step to be taken was to once more securely barricade the door. It seemed cruel to leave their companion exposed, but he seemed, so far as they could judge, dead; and Joe declared that to fetch him in would probably cost the lives of a couple more; and as he spoke he was thrusting a rough plank into the opening.

"I can't stand that, Joe," exclaimed Harry, laying his hand upon the plank.

And before the shepherd could divine his object, the young man dashed out, reached the convict, raised him in his arms, and then half carrying, half dragging, bore him into the hut, which he reached breathless, but unharmed.

But Harry might have spared his pains; the risk to which he had exposed his life had been merely to place the body of the convict beyond reach of insult; but his men and boys cheered him loudly as he stood panting before them; and old Joe, as he took his post, rifle in hand, at a window, slapped his thigh, and muttered loudly to himself the words, "Trump—stand by him—the last," being all that were plainly heard.

There seemed to be no time to lose, though; and as soon as the door was well secured Harry also took his position by the window with the old shepherd—the convict, and Jerry, with the two boys, watching by the other.

And there they stood, awaiting the next assault, while the moon was sinking lower and lower, until at length they were left in darkness, save for the rays of a few bright stars which successively peered down upon them between the still partially uncovered rafters. Jerry, who had been for the last hour patiently watching and rubbing the while the point of a spear upon a stone, suddenly threw down the stone, and set the spear in a corner, saying—

"No fight now. All done. Not come till a sun get up."

Then, placing reliance in their black companion's knowledge of his fellows' habits, the party relaxed their vigilance, and after waiting another hour, the barricade was removed, and Harry and the shepherd crept out to reconnoitre, and obtain provisions and more ammunition from the stores by the tent.

Harry was upon hands and knees, but with his cocked revolver in his belt. They crept cautiously to the tent, softly filled a bag with dampers, and placed a bottle of spirits in each pocket; ammunition, too, was secured, when, turning to retreat, they were about half-way back, when Harry started, and drew his pistol, for he felt himself seized, and, turning sharply, saw in the darkness a savage face upon a level with his own.

"No shoot—only Jerry," whispered a familiar voice. "No use stop, black fellers out in dark. Jerry went quicker as fast to see."

Jerry was right; for acting contrary to their customs, the blacks had taken advantage of the obscurity, and stolen forward to recover their spears.

"Back—quiet—praps kitch us," whispered Jerry;

when, as the words left his lips, three bright streaks of flame were seen to issue from the hut, and Harry felt himself to be thrown violently upon his face, and an arm laid across the back of his neck.

For a moment, Harry dreaded treachery; but he was reassured by feeling the head of Jerry laid close beside his, as there was the rapid soft beat of footsteps heard close to them, and five or six of their enemies rushed by.

"Been after spear," whispered Jerry, rising. "Now, come 'long. I say, no shoot!"

Harry and the old shepherd crawled quickly after the black, who seemed to them to be swallowed up in the darkness, for he glided quickly on before, and gave warning of his master's coming, when Harry, upon reaching the hut, found that as the man and boys were watching the departing forms of master and shepherd, Jerry had suddenly grown uneasy, sat up listening, and then crept rapidly out of the hut, knoberry in hand. Directly after it seemed to them that all was darkness, till a party of their enemies rose up as it were out of the earth, came forward, and began to loosen the spears in the hut side.

For a few moments the party in the hut were too much taken by surprise to act, and it was not until the blacks were moving off that, acting as it were by one impulse, and forgetful of the risk they ran of hitting friends, they all three fired from the open door.

Fortunately, the shots were fired in a different direction, and friends escaped as well as foes, who came, however, no more; though careful watch was kept, in spite of Jerry's assurances that they would come no more that night.

Water they had none, while now that the excitement was over, they found that their unwonted agitation and exertion had produced an almost intolerable thirst; but this had to be borne, as well as the misery of their position, till the stars paled, and brought to end that sleepless night; and never were the first rays of the sun more welcome than they were to the party prisoned in the hut.

Morning at last, though—bright, clear, and hope-inspiring; the sun gilding the sides of the hut and the green forest edge, where the watching party, ready with loaded weapons, expected their enemies to be. Weapons were levelled at window and door, but an hour passed, and nothing was heard but the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the cattle.

"Send the dog out, sir," said Joe, "and if the beggars are there they'll soon send their spears at him."

But Harry would not consent, and another hour passed, and another, but neither twig nor blade of grass was seen to move; and at last Harry began to be of opinion that the intention of the enemy was to starve them out.

"No," said Jerry, though, when he heard this idea broached, "shoot too much. No like big gun. All gone away. Come again some day."

But it was not until late in the afternoon that Harry would consent to the black's going out to reconnoitre, when he returned after an hour with the welcome intelligence that he had followed their enemies' trail for some distance.

Harry Clayton heard the news, though, gloomily, for security now seemed to have fled for ever from Gurra Gully. There was the curse of bloodshed upon the place, and the young man shuddered as he thought of

the life he had cut short; and it was with sorrowful hearts that Harry and his men stood over the shallow graves they had dug for the bodies of their companions—the blacks having carried away their own killed and wounded.

It was a quiet spot where the two men were laid, and the survivors turned gloomily away, feeling that the time might be close at hand when they might be lying cold, stern, and lifeless, waiting for the few shovelfuls of earth to be laid upon their breasts, and the sods replaced to grow once more green and bright as if no

To-day, perhaps, it is strained to its greatest extent by horror, but after a few hours it has gone back to its old position. Jones, traveller to the great house of Rumdrum, Asser, and Salens, the great wholesale chemists and druggists, is in "the pitch-in," as the officials call it, upon the South-Northern Railway. He is much shaken, and beholds horrors enough to scare him. You would think that he would never travel by railway again. But even if he has not forgotten the great accident, you will find him the very next week comfortably seated in a first-class carriage, and chatting politics to



JERRY AT HOME.—(Page 21.)

corpse lay beneath, turning slowly to the dust from which it was formed. Grim and bitter was the aspect of master and man as they turned away, armed to the teeth, and sternly scanning the scrub around for enemies, suspicion always rife; and it seemed certain that Harry's words were correct, as, looking forward to their next brush with the natives, he said that peace had departed from Gurra Gully, to leave there war to the knife.

There is a certain elasticity in the human mind which is, without doubt, highly advantageous to its possessor.

a fellow-traveller, or skimming over the money article in the *Times*.

It was the same with Harry Clayton and his men. For a few days they were given to starting with every rustle of the bushes. The hut was finished in haste, and they slept with loaded revolvers by their sides, and worked always with one man armed to the teeth on the watch. Jerry, the black, was almost driven mad by being constantly employed in following tracks made by themselves; while no sheep or heifer strayed but it was

mentally seen being driven away or speared by the old dwellers in the land.

If Jerry had not been the most amiable of blacks, he would have struck work and gone off. In fact, he did at times seem to be decidedly put out on being so constantly called to hunt upon false trails; but the remembrance of the mutton, and the rotundity he was allowed to give to his person, always determined him to stop; and after a good feed and a digestive sleep, Budgeriga was as shiny and good-tempered as ever.

Thus, as days slipped by, and the hut was more strongly fortified, the dangers of the past seemed to grow more distant, until they almost faded away.

But they were not without something to remind them of the past. There was a rough wooden cross put up over the grave of the two men; and the dog, whose wound was now quite healed, bore all so strongly in mind that he took to confounding Jerry with his enemies whenever he saw him armed with his spear, snarling too, and showing his teeth, until bullied into silence; when, as if to keep his memory green, he would lie down and lick his scar.

Busy men could not afford to sit and think of past troubles, and whenever the subject was mentioned, Harry always gave it as his opinion that the natives had had too severe a lesson to tempt them to come again.

But not so Jerry; for when asked for his opinion, he always grinned, showing his white teeth to great advantage, then poising his spear, and dropping into the attitude of throwing, he would exclaim—

"Nuzzer time, come all again; dam black feller."

The days flew by though, and Jerry's "nuzzer time" did not make its appearance, so that the settlers became more and more lulled into security. Guns that had always held bullets now frequently contained charges of small shot, with which old Joe would often bring back a dish of small birds, for a change from their monotonous diet; but Joe always declared that the savoury skewers of birds showed a great mistake in nature's construction, "For," said he, "they ought to have been made solid, when there would have been something to bite at."

Jerry, too, could always catch a stick of fish in the river; and, amongst other things, the vegetable seeds Harry had brought were got into the ground.

There was no time for them to think of past troubles, and now that the first great dread had worn off, Harry hugged himself with the idea that he should soon have served a seven years' apprenticeship for his Rachel, and be a richer man than Jacob of old in flocks and herds.

And those were busy times—days of earnest labour, when long as daylight lasted they were attending to their cattle, making pens, cutting down wood to form hurdles, shearing, gardening, watching, or doing little matters to add to the comfort of the house. The provisions they had brought were somewhat shrunk, but then vegetables were increasing as well as the flocks, while a crop of corn showed well for the harvest.

Nine months soon glide away when men are fully employed, and at times Harry could hardly believe that their sojourn in the wilderness would soon have been a year in duration. More than once since the native attack, though, he had regretted not settling down nearer to some neighbour, though he never allowed old Joe to even suspect this change in his opinions. He

was given, too, at this time, to look with a feeling akin to pity upon the natives, whom he felt that they were undeniably driving from their hunting grounds, if not their home; but he always called to mind afterwards that, rich as the land was, the aborigines had never made good use of the fertile soil.

Wilderness! It was a very garden of Eden—a smiling, undulating land of wood, plain, and dell; while the Gully, which now Harry renamed St. Runwald's, was a vale of which a prince might have been proud. And here, for his daring, he was lord of an estate the size of a parish—a principality where his words were law, where the bounties of nature were spread around, with, so far, but one alloy—the visits of the natives.

The heat was never intense; rain came in due season, but in moderation; while in the hottest times, beneath the gummy, pointed leaves of the trees, which broke and filtered down, as it were, the ardent rays of the sun, the richest of grasses flourished, to make fat and sleek Harry's flocks and herds.

Seated at the hut door after the labours of the day, and enjoying the only thoroughly congenial companion he had—his pipe—Harry would gaze right away far as the eye could reach upon rich, park-like land, and then it was that he would recall the old country of her for whose sake he had sought this distant spot.

But sleep would soon put an end to thoughts of this description. The day's labours were arduous to a degree, and to a great extent the settlers followed the example of the birds around, retiring early to rest—sleeping, too, now with far less fear of being interrupted, since the only two or three natives they had seen of late had fled hurriedly to the cover of the wood, and on being followed were found to have gone right away.

"They had so sharp a lesson, that we shall see them no more as enemies," said Harry.

"Say pr'aps to it, sir—say pr'aps," said Joe. "I never did like that bolting away into the bush; it's a bad sign. I'd rather see 'em turn a bit troublesome, and come up openly to try and steal."

"I would not," said Harry; "and for my part, hope they may never let me see their coal-black phizzes any more. By the way, though, where's Jerry? I did not see him all day yesterday."

"Warn't he with you, sir?" said the old shepherd.

"No," said Harry, "I thought that you had him."

"Then he's gone, sir, safe."

"Gone?" repeated Harry.

"Yes, sir, safe. Wonder he never went before. Been with us 'most a year, which is wonderful for one of those blacks."

"But he was well treated, and I never gave him a harsh word," said Harry.

"Lord bless you, sir," said Joe, "that's nothing; they never settle down long. He was tired, so now he's pulled off his clothes, and put on a bit of paint, and gone off with his spear to enjoy a bit of bush life again. He's a long way on to his tribe by now; and, by and by, when he takes it into his head again, he'll come back, and ask for his togs, just as if nothing had happened, and he hadn't been out of sight."

Joe's words were proved to be quite correct, for one of the lads brought in that same night Jerry's blood-stained—sheep's blood-stained—trousers, and old check shirt, which garments had been found hanging over one of the hurdles; Joe shaking his head and

hoping that they would have no more troubles with the natives before Jerry came back to them.

If they could have seen the black sitting in complacent ease in his bark shanty, a cincture round his forehead, with his gin, the blackest of the black, they would probably have thought it would be a long time before they again saw their friend of the sable skin.

Gems of the Past.

THERE is to be seen just now at the British Museum, arranged by groups in various apartments, a collection of Greek and Roman antiquities, which will be found full of interest and instruction for the general public as well as for the special student, and with which we advise our readers to acquaint themselves while the objects composing it remain in their present quarters. How long that will be we cannot tell. The collection is offered by its owner, the well-known dealer and connoisseur, Signor Alessandro Castellani, for the Museum to take entire or leave.

The opportunities for such acquisitions are likely to get rarer every year. While there is an increasing competition on both sides of the Atlantic for the possession of the works of ancient art, there is no corresponding increase in the number of such works in the market. True, the excavation of ancient sites, coming to be better organized and more actively conducted than heretofore, may yield in the future discoveries that will throw into the shade the discoveries of the past. But even if this were to happen to an extent greater than can possibly be foreseen, there would not necessarily result any great gain to our museums. The fruits of such famous discoveries would remain in the countries where they were found. In Greece for a long time past, and latterly in the Turkish dominions as well, the export of antiquities important either by scale or notoriety has been pretty effectually prohibited. To the Greeks, and to the Greeks only, will thus belong the custody of such treasures as those which German enterprise is at this moment unearthing, with amazing rapidity and success, in the sacred plain of Altis, the site of the ancient Olympia. There, from where they lie softly embedded in the alluvial soil, we find coming to light, beneath the spades of the Prussian scientific expedition, figure after figure of the groups sculptured by Pæonius and Alcamenes, contemporaries of Phidias at the heroic climax of Greek history and art, for the pediments of the great temple of Zeus. If there were a chance of mighty works like these ever coming within our reach to purchase, then perhaps we might be chary of spending public money upon minor or subsidiary forms of art.

But there is, and will be, no such chance. The Prussians are working in the interests of science only, not of their own country and its collections. The originals will go to Athens; and the museums of the West, in this and similar cases, will have to be content with casts and reproductions. For their enrichment with originals, museums must henceforth count chiefly upon minor and ornamental objects, or upon such others as, being incidentally discovered, excite no great attention on the spot. Among such classes of objects there will always be much both precious and beautiful intrinsically, and of inestimable use in helping us to realize

the life and genius of antiquity by the side—too much neglected in the ordinary classical studies of Englishmen—of ancient art and handicraft. Of these valuable results of scattered or incidental discovery, Signor Castellani has here, for a second time, brought together a collection almost unequalled. His knowledge and enterprise have been the means of drawing into his hands a surprisingly rich yield from the ancient cities of Etruria, as well as from almost every digging that is made, every tomb into which the ploughshare breaks, in the less accessible and civilized regions of Apulia and Lucania, and in many quarters of the Levant besides. For the guidance of the reader, we proceed to sketch—necessarily in a light and general way—the character of the chief classes of objects which compose the collection, and to indicate whereabouts in the galleries they are severally to be found.

Let us begin with the gold ornament room. Compared with most museums, our own is already rich in gold ornaments. The Louvre boasts of the Campana collection. To the Hermitage at St. Petersburg a choice and splendid treasure has been yielded by the excavations of Kertch, the ancient Panticapæum. The existing collection of the British Museum has been formed principally out of the Blacas purchase, a spirited *coup* made by Mr. Disraeli during a former tenure of power, and out of the Castellani purchase of 1873. The student has only to examine the objects now offered to us (which he will find in the cases lined with red) in connection with those we already possess (these are in the cases with blue lining), to understand how the two combined would form the richest and most complete historical collection of ancient jewellery in the world. The new is admirably adapted to fill up gaps in the old. The work of the ancient goldsmith in plain gold, fashioned by itself into beautiful and delicate forms, and not yet subordinated—as was the manner of later art—into a setting for precious stones, pastes, or enamels, this class of work is represented at several stages. First, the Etruscan sites of Cære and Clusium send early and comparatively rude examples, in which the grains of gold soldered in patterns upon the surface have not attained the minuteness, nor the designs the delicacy, of the perfect time, and the stamp of an archaic simplicity and vigour rests upon the art.

Next, from famous and luxurious cities of Magna Græcia, from Tarentum and Metapontum, we find ladies' earrings wrought of an immense size, but with an unsurpassable beauty and delicacy—some in the shape of dolphins, others bent into a lovely whorl and terminating in female heads; the grain and flower and filigree work in all the objects of this group being of the most precious kind. No nation in the world, except the natives of India, ever wove gold into such beautiful forms as the Etruscans, or united it to so many different materials. In many of the early specimens now exhibited, gold dust, or rather minute grains of gold, have been sprinkled on the surface of the ornament, and then soldered with exquisite care. In one long ribbon of gold, a row of birds in relief alternates with lines of geometrical patterns, wrought in granulated work. There are also bracelets of open-work, with winged monsters on the clasps, fit for the wrist of Venus. Another wonderful effort of taste and industry is an oval bottle, ornamented with rows of Vandykes,

in imitation of the Græco-Phœnician variegated glass. In the same case is a buckle, with a bold couchant lion, in *repoussé* work. Then, a case of earrings and necklaces from Vulci seems to mark a time of transition in the art; instead of gold by itself, we find pendants and ornaments of many-coloured enamel—enamel butterflies for the clasps of a necklace, enamel creatures of all kinds, beautifully designed, for the drops of earrings. A later and less happy development occurs in the objects from Syria, which fill another case. Here are bracelets, fragments of diadems, medallions, and other things, of vast elaboration and richness alike in the jewelling, enamelling, and setting; but such as to betray the spirit of the decadence, the love of mere display and gorgeousness, the degeneracy of the artistic sense which belonged to these late inheritors of the Greek civilization. At all these stages, we find in the present collection examples that are either better than those yet known, or else quite unique.

Still more artistic is the jewellery of the time when granulated and filigree work was combined with perfect modellings of human and animal forms—real and ideal. One pair of earrings shown here is in a convoluted form, representing a curled flower, the earring terminating in a beautiful female head. This is fairy work. The earrings, though large, are hollow, slight, and were, it is suggested, attached to the head-dress. They were found at Metapontum, in Magna Græcia. Near these is an earring still more richly ornamented with rosettes, and also terminating in a woman's head. The jewellery from Tarentum is also very marked in character, and might have been just snatched from the dressing table of Helen. There is also in the same case a golden scaral, with the figure of a seated woman cut in intaglio on the inner side; and a ring the device of which is the intaglio of a mounted figure, an emblem of Tarentum, which prided itself on its horses. One case of earrings and necklace is from Vulci, the Etruscan Volsci. Many of these are adorned with coloured enamels. Two of the necklaces have clasps made of many-coloured butterflies, and several of the earrings have pendants of enamelled birds and animals, beautifully executed. In one the involuted part of the earring contains two little doves in white enamel. These were found during the excavations by Prince Torlonia, and they were formerly so rare that the British Museum had only a single specimen.

The Syrian-Greek jewellery is more splendid and showy, as one might expect from the wealth and gorgeousness of the country. There is a wreath for the hair, formed of two vine branches with pearl grapes. A green breastplate, as for Cleopatra or Arsinoë, is clasped by a huge cornucopia, ornamented with plasma, and another bracelet has for a clasp a shrine with a deity seated in it. Two gold medallions, with female busts in relief, show, as the critics contend, the poverty of design and the coarseness of hand of the times of the Ptolemies, Herods, and Antiochuses.

The massive Byzantine earrings show how gold gradually was used merely as a substance to hold and divide precious stones and enamels. There are only a few silver ornaments. The most important is an Etruscan tiara ornamented in rude *repoussé* with birds and geometrical fancies.

So we pass from late Greek to Imperial times, and presently down to the times of Imperial Christianity.

There is a vast number of Roman rings, some of them already well known to archæology, and of especial interest for the subjects engraved on them. The gems, again, are over two hundred in number, including several mythological subjects of the finest class, some rare Imperial portraits, and in the Christian cycle, among other things, an especially large and famous amethyst, with the symbol of the fish cut in cameo. A feature in which this collection is unique is its store of Imperial medals, Roman and Byzantine, with their sumptuous settings still preserved; for, though ancient medals were as a matter of course made to be set, it is rare to find them with their settings intact. The earliest kind of Roman medal or medallion, made always of bronze, used to be set in a broad circle, ornamented with one or two beaded borders, and of such settings the museum has good specimens already. But it is deficient in the richer settings of the gold or silver medallions of the Lower Empire. The legionary of those degenerate days liked to have the effigy of his master in a material intrinsically valuable, and it is in the late gold and silver medals and their settings that the Castellani collection particularly abounds. We will only cite further, among the curious illustrations of ancient life exhibited in this room, the bronze badge or plate of a slave, whose master seems, by the symbol of the cross, to have been a Christian; and a set of lady's dressing or bathing things made of silver—namely, a box with several compartments for cosmetics, a mirror and case, a strigil or scraper, and an oil flask.

This leads us to another portion of the collection, which is set out in the cases of the second vase-room, and is of singular interest and singular completeness in its range. Our conception of the details of ancient life is but fragmentary at best, and we grasp gladly at all that helps us to complete the picture. Among the objects that so help us, archæology gives no trivial place to the toilet appliances of ladies. Etruscan ladies, especially, were wont to use things that are nowadays very precious to us in our studies. The Etruscans, as all the world knows, were above all things a race of metallurgists, of workers in bronze; and this skill of theirs was exercised in a particular degree upon the instruments of the dressing table and the bath. Bronze mirrors, each with a subject of mythology engraved in outline on the back, and kept in bronze mirror cases engraved in a like manner, have been found in immense numbers, and the engravings on them, published by modern research in ponderous folios, are full of interest from the way they illustrate the adaptation and partial transformation by the Etruscans of Greek conceptions in religion and the Greek manner in design. The present collection contains several mirrors and mirror cases of great beauty and interest; among them, a mirror with what seems like an archaic and conventional representation of the deity of the Dawn—a female figure having four wings on her body and two on her feet, on each side of whom stands the figure of a youth; another with a representation of Perseus, accompanied by Minerva, stretching out his hand to take the eye from the Graiæ, the names of the personages being written beside them in the Etruscan form and character; and a mirror cover with a fine subject of Ganymede and the eagle in relief. These have been published in the annals of the Archæological Institute at Rome. Like all the mirrors of the collec-

tion, with one exception, they come from Palestrina, the ancient Præneste; and the same city of Præneste stands alone in yielding numbers of a much rarer class of instruments in bronze—the so-called *cista*, or bronze dressing caskets.

These caskets, which the ladies of Præneste, it is evident, used to carry with them to the bath, and which, like their other trinkets and favourite possessions, were placed beside them in their tombs, are usually engraved with mythological subjects, both on the sides and lid. The engraving is of various styles, such as we may suppose to have been borrowed from the Greek; sometimes skilfully and in the purest taste, sometimes with more or less of coarseness and affectation, by native artists of Etruria, about the third and second centuries before Christ. In all the collections of Europe there do not exist above a hundred of them. Signor Castellani here offers us no less than twelve, including some of the utmost beauty and interest. One, for instance, carries a fine design of Atalanta; another, a design of Æneas, Latinus, and Lavinia. This last is particularly valuable, not only because of its engraving, but because of the number of articles of the toilet found inside it—two armlets and two brooches of bronze, a pair of tweezers, a strigil, reels, several small vessels for unguents, and the like. In one of the table cases close by are exhibited a large number of the contents of the *cista*—combs, a sponge, turned green by contact with the metal, two boxes, one in the form of a duck, the other in that of a sandalled foot. It is curious to compare these relics of the daily life of the ladies in old Præneste, these shreds of the *mundus muliebris*, with two votive tablets preserved in the Greco-Roman basement of the museum. These were discovered long ago by Lord Aberdeen at Amyclæ, in Sparta. They were dedicated by priestesses, and bear representations in relief of just such sets of combs, oil flasks, mirrors, pouncet boxes, and the like, as we see in the original among the contents of these figured caskets of Etruria. Placed near the *cista* are some interesting fragments of thin ivory cut for inlaying, of which the design seems to be a Greek imitation of Egyptian work. Another oblong portion of an ivory casket has a *graffito* in a good style of Aphrodite and Eros; another, a relief of a lion, painted and gilt; and in the same cases are some specimens of the most ancient jewellery from tombs at Tarquinii—necklaces in which large beads of glass or amber alternate with bosses of silver. Add some good small bronzes—a flying Cupid, a praying priestess, a head of Atys, and others, a long rusted iron hatchet, which was found, together with a vase of the most primitive style of pottery and a curious bronze strainer, with two lions and two hares upon the rim of it—and the reader will have some idea of the extraordinary riches of this collection in its minor items.

Signor Castellani has marbles to offer us that we may well be eager to acquire. The reader will find most of them exhibited in the room with the Phigaleian Frieze, and in that with the Demeter of Cnidus. There is a colossal Indian Bacchus from Posilippo, the double, and a better double, of a well-known figure in the Vatican. The work is Roman, imitated from the Greek, and is in astonishing preservation. Who first set this type of the long-robed, long-haired, long-bearded deity, we do not with precision know; but that it is a regular

and accepted type we may gather from a hundred repetitions on reliefs and vase paintings, and as such we should be glad to possess this example were its workmanship less skilful and its aspect less impressive than they are. No echo of a great mythologic type, but an original study of a realistic school, an original of late Greek art, is the brilliant and breathing figure of a boy pulling a thorn out of his foot in the same room. This, again, no lover of art or antiquity would be willing to let go when he has once seen it. Then there are some heads of great interest—a perfect Euripides, a youthful Apollo, and a youthful Dionysius, beautiful though bruised; and lastly, among several sculptures of the Imperial time which are on their way but have not yet arrived, is a curious marble disc bearing a relief of Apollo and Diana as they slay the Niobids on a mountain side, and treating the subject with more completeness and detail than any work hitherto known.

Thus it is hard to say that any one class of objects is richer or more desirable than the others. Whether we turn to the statues in marble, to the figured bronze *cista* and mirrors, and like objects pertaining to them, or to the wonderful treasure of gold ornaments and jewellery, rings, gems, and medals from the earliest times of antiquity down to the dawn of the Middle Age, we find illustrations of human genius and of history such as we should be loth to relinquish the hope of possessing.

Mems by a Matron.

IT may be quizzical, but it is a habit that has grown upon me as the mother of many boys—that is to say, if seven be many. I still call them boys, though years have glided so rapidly by that I have lived to see six of them married, and the old home is pretty well taken by storm on high days and holidays, when fathers, mothers, and grandchildren arrive. I say again, it may be quizzical, but the first thing I took notice of in the girls who were to be my daughters-in-law was their underclothing. Fine dresses, silks, satins, and brocades, always have seemed contemptible to me if the hidden was poor, shabby, and mean; and, trifling as it may seem, depend upon it the state of the dress not seen is a great indication of the character of a woman, be she maid or wife. Care, neatness, and the choice of good underclothing has always seemed to me the sure sign of delicacy of character, purity of mind, and that sweet refinement which no style in outer garments could supply—delicacy and refinement that are ingrained, and which, as age creeps on and the first blush of youth and beauty passes away, grow stronger, and last even to the end.

"Girls," I have always said, "never mind the outer dress—that is sure to be attended to; but think of the unseen." For I know of nothing nicer or more refined than the neatly brodered under-skirt, the delicately embroidered chemisette, or the graceful bodice. Plenty of ladies may be seen *bien gantée*; but how many, to speak as a homely old woman, think of the *bas*?

Such matters have changed wondrously since I was a girl. In those days we went to the draper's and bought what we wanted in material—long cloth, cambric, and flannel—and they were made up at home after some strange, antiquated fashion. Patterns for undercloth-

ing were hardly thought of; fit, save as to length and breadth, never taken into consideration; but now, and not before it was time, the preparation of a lady's trousseau is made an artistic task: there are style, fashion, and clever manipulation applied to the homely, old-fashioned articles of under-dress, with the result that all is exquisite in its finish, refined and artistic in its aims.

Again, with those little visitors who come so rapidly to fill up the gaps made by disease and old age, there used to be a big pincushion with that elaborate "Welcome, little stranger" upon it; but the welcome was almost as rude and pointed as the pins. There were starched robes, roughened, spiky, nimbus-like caps, and scores of little awkward garments that were almost without form and void; so that the delicate, tender skin was frayed and tortured, the unfortunate baby turned into an uncouth bale, and too often it was peevish and fretful, and set down as ill, solely because it was badly, even painfully, dressed.

Mais nous avons changé tout cela. Baby has been taken in hand, too, by clever artists, who, as if for the pure love of the thing, have designed, planned, worked, and contrived for the little stranger, robe, frock, and under-clothing that combine the *acmé* of warmth, comfort, and prettiness of design. Why, I remember of old, babies that had a weird, Jerry Flintwich kind of aspect, with their caps over one eye, their dress all atwist, and their strings either strangling them with tightness, or so contrived that if you took the poor little things, and gave them a shake, every scrap of clothing would slip off. There was the other style, too, so charmingly described by little Lotty in Mr. Alberty's "Two Roses." It may be remembered how she and her sister made flannel shirts for somebody's baby, and tried one on, but found that it would not come off; and the unfortunate infant had to be cut out with a pair of scissors.

Poor baby! As if its little person did not require fitting properly, like those of larger growth.

This has been found out, and civilization and advance have raised up for us those who take for their branch of business the proper furnishing of all that pertains to wedding trousseaux, infants' layettes, or the outfit necessary for a journey to some far-off clime. Chief amongst these is Mrs. Addley Bourne, to whose establishment in Piccadilly I should strongly advise all ladies to go when those important periods in their life occur which render outfits necessary, though a visit for the minor and lesser comforts of a modern wardrobe can always be satisfactorily made. There are attractions enough at our large marts for the outer person; but the sensible woman, as I have said, thinks of other things than outward adornment, and, without egotism, I think I may say that mine are words bearing the mint mark of sense.

Things New and Old.

Dropping into Poetry.

Did the young ladies who drop into poetry at the slightest provocation, and despatch it to this office in a great hurry, with a request to please send them what it is worth, ever hear of Miss Acton? She was the Englishwoman who refuted the assertion of that vene-

rable Gruff-and-Glum, Dr. Johnson, that woman could not make a good book of cookery. She had written poems by the peck, and found that this species of lunacy did not succeed in the matter of money. So one day Mademoiselle went to see the famous publisher, Mr. Longman, and remarked that she desired to write a book that was really wanted.

"The world does not want poems," said this wise woman.

Mr. Longman more than hinted at a cookery book, and this extraordinary person, instead of flying in a rage and asking, "Shall I write about tarts, who have discoursed about hearts and darts?" immediately went off and wrote one of the best cookery books that ever soothed a hungry man.

Consequence: Mighty accumulation of ducats.

Let the gentle beings who long to see their mild jingles in the *Tribune* ponder well this tale, and remember that a good salad is a much pleasanter thing than a "soaring into sentiment."—*New York Tribune*.

Discovery of Oil Paintings.

A Roman society, which has commenced excavations close to the monument of Minerva Medica, has come upon some very interesting things, among which are the paintings that adorned a columbarium which the Roman archaeologists and artists believe to be of the Augustine age, and of great value both to science and art. In making preparations for constructing the central hall in the Conservatory Palace at the Capitol, a ground plan has been discovered, supposed to be that of the Temple of the Capitoline Jupiter, to which Dionysius gave a surface of 4,000 square feet. In the same place has been found a column of large size, which appears to belong to the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus.

Lighting a Room.

That excellent trade journal, the *Grocer*, says:—"There can be no doubt that, in spite of all our modern improvements, the best mode of lighting a room is by candles. It is doubtless the most expensive, and luxurious people who can afford it still cling to wax candles. This, however, is unnecessary, seeing that modern improvement in the manufacture of candles has rendered the best composite candles equal, in point of purity of flame, to those formerly made of the most costly wax or spermaceti. The candle may be placed wherever it is required, the amount of light graduated by using one or more; and when a number of candles are well distributed throughout a room, a soft, equally diffused light, without any particular glare at any particular place, is obtained, which affords the best attainable imitation of diffused daylight. The absence of hard shadows is another advantage of such diffusion. Next to the candle comes the lamp, and this should be of moderate size, and portable. Two or more small lamps are better than one large lamp giving an equal quantity of light, as the small lamps may be so arranged as to illuminate the room more equally than is possible with the one glaring flame. All rooms lighted by gas or single large-flame lamps are improved by having light walls, white ceilings, mirrors, and light furniture." Very good doctrines to promulgate, no doubt; but anything but encouraging to those who hold shares in the great companies who supply our gas.

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER XXV.—FRANK PRATT'S CROSS-EXAMINATION, AND APRÈS.

CAPTAIN VANLEIGH had declared solemnly that Penreife was "the deucedest dullest place" he ever saw in his life; and Sir Felix said it was "nough to kill fler;" but, all the same, there was no talk to Trevor of moving; they lounged about the house chatting to each other, and consumed their host's cigars to a wonderful extent; they ate his dinners and drank his wine; and Vanleigh generally contrived to go to bed a few guineas richer every night from the whist table.

Pratt protested against the play, but Trevor laughed at him.

"My dear boy," he said, "why not let such matters take their course? Van is my guest; surely I should be a bad host if I did not let him win a little spare cash. Have you anything else to grumble about?"

"Heaps," said Pratt, trying to put his little legs on a chair in front of the garden seat where he and his friend were having a morning cigar; but they were too short, and he gave up the attempt.

"Go on, then," said Trevor, lazily; "have your grumble out."

"Hadh't I better go back to town?" said Pratt, sharply.

"Why, are you not comfortable?"

"Yes—no—yes—no. I'm precious uncomfortable. I see too much," said Pratt.

"Well, let's hear what you see that makes you so uncomfortable," said Trevor, carelessly.

"Dick, old boy," said Pratt, "you won't be offended with me for what I say?"

"Not I," was the answer.

"What are you thinking about?" said Pratt, watching the other's face.

"I was only thinking about you, and wondering why, if you don't like what you see, you can't close your eyes."

"That's what you are doing, Dick!" said Pratt, eagerly.

"My dear Frank, have you discovered powder barrels beneath the house—is there a new plot?"

"Don't be so foolish, Dick. Why don't you let those two fellows go?"

"Because they are my guests, and stay as long as they like."

"And are doing their very best to undermine your happiness."

"Nonsense, man."

"Dick, old fellow, answer me honestly. Don't you care a great deal for that little girl up at Tolcarne?"

There was a few moments' pause, during which the colour came into Trevor's cheek.

"Honestly, I do," he said at last. "Well, and what of that?"

"Well, Dick, are you blind? Van's making all the play that he can, and father and aunt favour him. He's there nearly every day. He's there now."

Trevor gave a start, and turned round to face his friend, his lips twitching and fingers working; but he burst out laughing the next moment.

"Anything else, Franky?"

"Laugh away," said Pratt, who looked nettled—"only give me credit for my warning when you find I am right."

"That I will," said Trevor. "Now then, go on! What's the next plot against my peace of mind?"

"Suppose I ask you a question or two!"

"All right—go on!"

"Have you noticed anything wrong with Humphrey?"

"Been precious sulky lately."

"Sulky! The fellow's looked daggers at you, and has barely answered you civilly."

"Well, he has been queer, certainly."

"Why is it?" said Pratt.

"Bilious—out of order—how should I know?"

"The poor fellow's in love!"

"Poor Stephen," said Trevor, idly.

"And he sees a powerful rival in the path," continued Pratt.

"The deuce he does!" said Trevor, laughing. "Is that Van, too? But hang it, Frank!" he cried, starting up, "seriously, I won't stand any nonsense of that kind. If Van's been making love to that little lass, I'll put a stop to it. Why, now I think of it, I did see him looking at her!"

"No!" said Pratt, quietly. "It isn't Van—he's too busy at Tolcarne!"

"Silence, croaker!" cried Trevor, laughing in a constrained fashion. "But, come—who is the powerful rival?"

"Dick, old fellow, I'm one of those, and no humbug, who have a habit of trying to ferret out other people's motives."

"Don't preach, Franky. Is it Flick? because if it is, the girl's laughing at him."

"No," said Pratt; "it isn't Flick."

"Then who the deuce is it?"

"You!"

Trevor burst into a hearty laugh.

"Why, Frank!" he exclaimed, "if ever there was a mare's-nesting old humbug, it's you. Why, whatever put that in your head?"

Pratt sat looking at him in silence for a few moments.

"Dick," he said, "if ever there was a deliciously unsuspecting, trusting fellow, you are he."

"Never mind about that," said Trevor. "I want to get this silly notion out of your head."

"And I want to get it into yours."

"Well, we'll both try," said Trevor. "You begin: I'll settle you after."

"To begin, then," said Pratt. "You've several times met that girl in the lane yonder."

"Yes; now you mention it—I have."

"About the time when you've been going up to Tolcarne?"

"Yes; and it was evident that she was there to meet Humphrey. Why I laughed and joked the pretty little lass about it."

"Yes; and did you ever meet Humphrey afterwards?"

"Bravo! my little cross-examining barrister. Yes I did—two or three times. I'm not sworn, mind," added Trevor, laughing.

"True men don't need swearing," said Pratt.

"Thanks for the compliment. Well?"

"How did Humphrey look?"

"Well—yes—now you mention it—to be sure! He looked black as thunder. Oh, but Franky, I'll soon clear that up. I wouldn't hurt the poor lad's feelings for the world."

"Wait a bit," said Pratt.

"What, more mystery? Well, go on."

"Did it ever strike you as strange that you should encounter a pretty, well-spoken little girl like that in your walks?"

"No; I told you I thought she was out to see Humphrey."

"Or that you should meet her in the passages at home here, to bring you letters, or messages from Mrs. Lloyd?"

"Well, now you mention it, yes: it has struck me as odd once or twice."

"Never struck you that the girl came of her own accord?"

"Never, and I'm sure she never did. She rather avoided me than not; so come, master counsellor, you're out there."

"Did it never strike you that she was sent?"

Trevor did not answer, but sat gazing in his friend's face for a few moments, as if he were trying to catch his drift, and then in a flash he seemed to read all the other meant; for his brow grew cloudy, and he sat down hastily, then got up, and took a few strides up and down before reseating himself.

"Well," said Pratt, "can you see it?"

"I see what you mean, Franky; but I can't quite think it. The old woman would never have the impudence to plan such a thing."

"Dick, old fellow, it's as plain as the day. She's made up her mind that her little niece shall be mistress of Penreife, and she is playing her cards accordingly."

"Then I'm afraid, if that is her game, she'll lose the trick."

"Dick, old fellow," said Pratt, "you're not annoyed?"

"But I am—deucedly annoyed—not with you, Franky; but don't say any more now, I mean to think it over."

"Being a friend to an unsuspicious man is about the most unpleasant post on the face of the earth," said Pratt, moralizing, as he saw his friend stride away. "Everybody hates you for enlightening him, and even he cannot forgive you for waking him from his pleasant dreams. Now where has he gone?—oh, to bully that plotting old woman. Well, I've done right, I think; and now I'll have my stroll."

Frank Pratt started off to do what he called "a bit of melancholy Jaques," in the pleasant woodland lanes; and was not long in finding an agreeable perch, where he seated himself, lit his big pipe, and began communing with himself till the pipe was smoked out; and then he sat on and thought without it, till a coming light footstep took his attention.

"Now I make a solemn affidavit," he said, "that I did not come here to play the spy upon anybody's actions. If they choose to come and act under my very nose, why I must see the play. Who's this?"

"This" proved to be little Polly, who walked quickly by him, glancing suspiciously round as she continued her walk.

"Scene the first!" said Pratt; "enter village maiden with flowers. To her village lover," he continued as a heavy step was heard. "No, by Jove! it's Dick."

He was right, for Trevor came along at a swinging pace, and apparently in a few moments he would overtake the girl.

"If I didn't believe Dick Trevor to be as open as the day, how suspicious that would look!" thought Pratt.

Trevor passed on without seeing him, and then there was a pause. The sun's rays darted through the overhanging boughs; birds flitted and sang their little love songs overhead; and in a half-dreamy way, Pratt sat thinking upon his perch till voices and coming footsteps once more aroused him.

"It's them!" he said to himself. "I'll go."

He made as if to descend, but it struck him that he should be seen if he moved, and he sat still watching—to see at the end of a few moments Tiny Rea coming along the footpath, evidently looking agitated as she walked on in advance.

"She's never seen Dick and her together!" Pratt said, mentally; and he felt as if he could have run and spoken to the girl; but that which next met his eyes made him utter a low, deep sigh, and he sat as if made of the mossy stone upon which he sat, as Fin Rea followed her sister, hanging on Mr. Mervyn's arm, and gazing eagerly in his face, as he evidently told her something which was of interest.

They passed slowly by, as if in no hurry to overtake Tiny; and Pratt watched them till quite out of sight, when he got down in a heavy, stunned fashion, to go slowly farther and farther into the wood, where he threw himself down amongst the ferns, and buried his face in his hands, as he groaned—

"More than old enough to be her father!"

CHAPTER XXVI.—MISUNDERSTANDING.

MEANWHILE Trevor had gone along the lane, evidently meaning to make a call at Tolcarne. He was walking with his head bent down, thinking very deeply over what Pratt had said, when he stopped short with a start; for there, just in front, and gazing at him in a startled way, was little Polly.

He nodded to her and passed on; but ere he had gone a dozen yards, he turned sharp round, and retraced his steps, calling to the girl to stop.

"I'll get to the bottom of it at once," he said. "Here, Polly."

The little girl turned, and stood trembling before him, her face like fire, but her eyes full of tears.

"Did you call me, sir?" she faltered.

"Yes, my little maid, I want a few words with you."

"Oh, sir, please—pray don't speak to me!" faltered the girl, bursting into tears.

"Why, you silly child, what are you afraid of?" cried Trevor, catching her by the wrist. "Look here, tell me this, and don't be afraid."

"No—no, sir," faltered the girl.

"Tell me now, honestly—there, there, stop that crying, for goodness' sake! Any one would think I was an ogre. I hate to see a woman crying."

"Please, sir, I am trying," sobbed the girl.

"Now then, I want to know this—you have often met me here—do you come to meet Humphrey?"

"No, sir."

"Then, why the deuce—there—there, I don't mean that—tell me why you do come."

"Aunt sends me to walk here, sir; but please don't say I told you, or she will be so angry."

"Then you don't want to come and walk here?"

"Oh, no, sir! I would much rather not," exclaimed the girl, eagerly.

"Your aunt sends you, then?" said Trevor, looking at her searchingly, while she gazed up in his eyes like a dove before a hawk.

"Ye-yes, sir!"

"Do you know why?"

The girl's face grew fiery red now, even to the roots of her hair, and as she looked appealingly at him, he flung her hand angrily from him.

"There, go back," he exclaimed. "I'm not cross with you, but—there, go home."

The girl sprang away, evidently frightened to death, and weeping bitterly, to pass these people—she could not tell whom—as she held down her head; but Trevor saw, and he knew that they saw him, and must have witnessed part of the interview; for the party consisted of Tiny Rea, her sister, and Mr. Mervyn.

"Was ever anything so provoking?" muttered Trevor, as they bowed and passed, taking a turning that led in another direction. "Oh! this is unbearable."

For a moment he stood irresolute, hesitating as to whether he should hurry after them; but he was, to use his own words, too much taken aback, and ended by following a narrow pathway into the woods, down which he had not gone half a dozen yards before he became aware that there had been another spectator to his interview with Polly, and that no less a person than Humphrey.

"What the devil are you doing there, sir!" roared Trevor, who was half beside himself with a rage which grew hotter as the bluff young Cornishman stood leaning on his thistle staff, and said, sturdily—

"Watching you, sir."

"Watching me?"

"Yes, sir. I did not mean to, but I was obliged when I saw what I did."

"Then you saw me talking to that girl?"

"Yes, sir, I did; and you had no right to do so."

"How dare you speak to me like that, sir?" roared Trevor; and thoroughly roused now, he caught the young bailiff by the throat, and for a few moments the ferns were trampled under foot as they wrestled together, till the veins stood up in knots in Humphrey's white forehead, as his hat fell off, and, grinding his teeth together, he put out his strength, and, with all the skill of a Cornish wrestler, threw Trevor heavily on his back.

"You would have it," said the bailiff, hoarsely. "You made me forget my place; so don't blame me for it. Have I hurt you, sir?"

The rage had departed as quickly as it came, and the young man went down on one knee by Trevor, who was half-stupned, but recovered himself quickly, and got up.

"No. I'm not much hurt," he said, hoarsely.

"You made me do it, sir," said Humphrey, pitifully. "You shouldn't have laid hands on me, sir—it made me mad."

"Made you mad!" said Trevor, angrily. "This is a pretty way to serve your master."

"You're no master of mine, sir, from now," cried Humphrey. "I can't stand to serve you no more. I'd have stuck to you, sir, through thick and thin, if you'd been a gentleman to me, but—"

"Do you dare to say I've not been a gentleman to

you, you scoundrel?" cried Trevor, menacingly, as he clenched his fists.

"Now, don't 'ee, sir," cried Humphrey, appealingly. "I don't want to hurt you, and if you drive me to it I shall do you a mischief."

"You thick-headed, jealous dolt!" cried Trevor, restraining himself with difficulty. "How can you be such an ass?"

"I don't blame you, sir," cried Humphrey, "not so much as that silly old woman who has set it all going."

"Then it is all true?" said Trevor, angrily. "Humphrey," he said, "you're as great a fool as that mother of yours; and—there, I'll speak out, though you don't deserve it: as to little Polly, you great dolt, I never said a tender word to her."

"Why, I saw you with her hand in yours, not ten minutes ago," cried Humphrey, indignantly.

"I've been calling you fool and dolt, Humphrey," said Trevor, cooling down, "when I've been both to let my passion get the better of me, as it has. There's a wretched mistake over this, altogether; and more mischief done," he continued, bitterly, "than you can imagine. You think, then, that Mrs. Lloyd has that idea in her head?"

"Think, sir!" cried the bailiff, hotly, "I know it. Hasn't she forbidden me to speak to the poor girl? Hasn't she half-broken her heart?"

"Humphrey," said Trevor, "you had good reason for feeling angry, but not with me."

Humphrey looked at him searchingly.

"You doubt me?" said Trevor.

"Will you say it again, sir?" cried the young man, pitifully—"will you swear it?"

"I give you my word of honour as a gentleman, Humphrey, that I have never given the girl a thought; and that this afternoon, when I spoke to her, it was to ask her if she came there to meet you; and she owned her aunt had sent her."

"Master Dick—Master Dick!" cried the bailiff, in a choking voice, "will you forgive me, sir? If I'd known that, sir, I'd sooner have cut my right hand off than have done what I did."

"It was all a mistake, Humphrey. There—that will do."

"But I said, sir, you were no master of mine—Master Dick—Mr. Trevor, sir. We were boys together, here—at the old place—don't send me away!"

"There, go now; that will do. Yes, it's all right, Humphrey. I'm not angry. Send you away? No, certainly not; only go now, and don't make a scene," said Trevor, incoherently, his eyes the while turned in another direction; for he had heard footsteps, and at the turn of the lane he could see through the trees that Mr. Mervyn was coming, with his two companions.

Trevor hurried off through the wood, so as to gain the path a hundred yards in advance, and then he sauntered along so as to meet them.

"If I can get a few words with her, I can explain," he said; and then they were close at hand.

"Ah, Mr. Trevor!" said Mervyn, gaily, for he seemed elated, and he held out his hand.

Before Trevor could take it, Fin had looked straight before her and marched on, her little lips pinched together, and her arm tight in that of her sister; while Tiny met Trevor's gaze in one short, sad look—piteous, despairing, and heartbroken—before she hurried away.

A Celestial New Year's Day.

IT has been my good fortune to be a spectator of, and in a measure a partaker in, the festivities incidental to New Year's Day in various parts of the globe—to wit, Germany, France, America, and China; but for thoroughly entering into its spirit commend me to the inhabitants of the latter. It is, however, somewhat paradoxical to associate the festivities which obtain in China with New Year's Day, as they differ from those of other countries in being held on different dates—frequently in January, more often in February, and occasionally in March; and thus partake more of the nature of a movable feast.

In some points the holiday resembles our Christmas Day. Friends separated by long distances are invited; relatives make strenuous efforts to partake of each other's hospitality; presents, consisting of tea, silk, edibles, and bouquets, are made; mutual congratulations are tendered, and a general air of good fellowship prevails.

Upon the occurrence of New Year's Day, the Celestial Government, through its organ, announces that from, say, the 20th of the 12th Moon the offices will be closed for four weeks, thus enabling the *employés* to enjoy a month's holiday. During this period "those under Heaven" make the most of the time, and, as far as this world's goods will permit, keep up a succession of feasts and rejoicings.

Before indulging in earthly pleasures, the Chinese deem it necessary to propitiate their household gods by rigidly performing various rites of a domestic nature—such as "sweeping their hearths"—which they look upon as honouring their deities; and on the eve of the New Year invariably indulge in a bath of what may be termed sweet water, as it is highly scented and fragrant; and, as the midnight hour draws near, don their most gorgeous apparel, and prostrate themselves before Heaven and Ko-tou. Being of a very ritualistic turn of mind, the altars are brilliantly illuminated, incense and gold and silver paper burnt; and, to heighten the effect, crackers are constantly let off. These ceremonies last till daylight, when the interchange of visits and the decoration of the houses are commenced, each striving to outdo his neighbour in embellishments. I cannot say much for the artistic merit, from an Englishman's point of view; but probably the inhabitants would think my ideas barbaric. The decorations consist principally of inscriptions hung in every conceivable place on the exterior and in the interior of the house, and also suspended on long poles or masts outside of the premises. These inscriptions, as a rule, are in the form of proverbs, such as "To be happy I must be just;" others containing requests of not too modest a kind, as "May I be so learned as to bear in my memory the substance of three million novels." What a book of reference that Chinaman would make were his wish gratified!

These sentences are written on various-coloured papers, showing what loss, if any, the family have sustained, the degree of mourning being denoted by white, blue, pale red, and scarlet; and those families to whom time has dealt kindly, and who have no loss to deplore, use a dark crimson.

Flowers are also used extensively in the decorations; scarcely a house can be passed without floral designs

meeting the eye. Although New Year's Day is a general holiday, yet in a walk through a Chinese city scarcely a pedestrian is to be seen, unless it be some gaily dressed servant speeding to acquaint Mrs. Twang-Chow, by means of a small pink card, that Mrs. Chow-Twang will do herself the inestimable pleasure of paying her a visit. Were it not for this occasional sign of life, one would imagine oneself in Goldsmith's deserted village, or fancy some fearful calamity had suddenly overtaken the inhabitants, or that one were in a city of the dead.

The shops are all closed, private house doors bolted, the touters, portable cookshops, beggars, street itinerants, quacks, and vendors of the celebrated razor paste for the million have disappeared. Even for the day that common object of the Chinese street, the little dirty street arab, is not seen; he, for once, is being treated like a human being, and taken from the mud into some hospitable house and feasted on the best.

Every one on New Year's Day seems to have commenced a new life. Even the saucy boat girls, who are at all times only too ready to crack a joke or give an incisive repartee—often of a questionable nature—are on their dignity, and must not be addressed in a flippant manner, "coming down" on one rather severely if one happens to be ignorant of the habits and behaviour appertaining to the day in question. Although, as I have before remarked, this is a day of general feasting, yet it bears most favourable comparison with civilized countries, or, we will say, Christian England. We see no drunkenness in the streets; and, moreover, whether the class be rich or poor, the indoor behaviour is of the utmost decorum, the amusements being rational in the extreme; no ribald song or jest is to be heard, or excessive drinking indulged in, each endeavouring to outvie his neighbour in correct behaviour. Again I could not help contrasting this with our Western mode of enjoying a holiday. In every respect the host is most punctilious, making no distinction as to the quality of his guests, but seeing that each one is properly attended to, and personally serving first one and then another with some dainty morsel with the chopsticks he has himself just used, and pledging them to drink, each guest being provided with a diminutive china cup, capable of holding about a table-spoonful. When all the cups are charged, at a given signal from the host, each guest raises his cup to his head, as a pledge, and then drinks the contents, or merely holds the cup to his lips during the time of drinking by the rest—as an ancient writer remarks, "For if the outward ceremonies are observed and kept, it is all one to them whether you drink or not." At the conclusion of the feast, theatrical performances, gambling, and the inevitable opium smoking are indulged in—these forms of dissipation extending over three days.

The Chinese are great lovers of pyrotechnic displays, and spend immense sums of money in fireworks during the holiday-making season, which attains its culminating point on the "Feast of Lanterns," one of the most scrupulously observed of festivals, and the one which, for gorgeousness in the matter of decorations, and displays of illuminated lanterns of every conceivable size and shape, surpasses all others.

Every house, howsoever humble, boasts of its lanterns, and in many cases its inmates have screwed and pinched to give a fitting display; and it is said that

even the wealthier classes practise great economy in their households some little time before the festival in order to purchase lanterns of sufficient magnitude and elegance of design—some being most beautifully executed, and of immense size. I have heard of their having reached to nearly 30 feet in diameter; this, however, must be taken *cum grano salis*. I never saw any approaching these dimensions.

The designs in these lanterns or transparencies consist of landscapes, insects, birds, beasts, &c., while many are shaped into hideous monstrosities to represent beetles, immense-headed fish—belonging, we presume, to some extinct species, the artists evidently letting their imagination run riot. Other lanterns are much more artistic, in that they are made to represent trees, flowers, rocks, &c., and when lighted the effect is very fine. In addition to these innumerable lanterns, the brightness of the scene is further enhanced by huge bonfires and splendid exhibitions of fireworks, in which it is acknowledged the Chinese are *facile princeps*. Certainly, the displays coming under my notice were, for beauty of colour and fantastic devices, most admirable. There are many popular legends explaining the origin of this feast. The one obtaining perhaps the most credence is the following:—

One evening, the daughter of a very famous mandarin fell into a river and was drowned. The inhabitants quickly came to search for the damsel, and to aid them in doing so an immense number of lanterns were lighted; but although these were kept burning all night, and a vigorous search instituted, yet the body was not discovered. The only comfort the bereaved parent found was in the alacrity with which the people tendered their services, and in their expressions of sorrow for his loss; their grief being as keen as if the lost one had been their sister, as they looked upon the mandarin as their father. On the same day in the ensuing year they made fires by the river, and continuing to do so year by year, the custom increased by degrees until it reached the dimensions of the present important festival.

Before concluding, I may remark that some fourteen days prior to New Year's Day robberies are very prevalent, which, it is said, is accounted for by the fact that if a person be in debt at the end of the year he is disgraced; so evil is done that good may come—unheard-of devices being resorted to to provide the necessary funds. Curiosities, at any other time realizing large prices, can at this period be purchased for a mere song. Money must be procured, and therefore Mr. Chinaman quiets his conscience by laying the flattering unction to his soul that in plundering his neighbours the need warrants the deed. It is an undeniable fact that more robberies occur at the close of the year than at any other period during the twelve months.

The Bells of Limerick.

THE old bells that hung in the tower of Limerick Cathedral were made by a young Italian, after many years of patient toil. He was proud of his work, and when they were purchased by the prior of a neighbouring convent, near the Lake of Como, the artist invested the profits of the sale in a pretty villa on the margin of the lake, where he could hear their Angelus music

wafted from the convent cliff across the waters at morning, noon, and night. Here he intended to pass his life; but this happiness was denied him. In one of those feudal broils which, whether civil or foreign, are the undying worm in a fallen land, he suffered the loss of his all; and when the storm passed he found himself without home, family, friends, and fortune. The convent had been razed to the ground, and the *chef-d'œuvre* of his handiwork, the tuneful chimes whose music had charmed his listening ear for so many happy days of his past life, had been carried away to a foreign land. He became a wanderer. His hair grew white and his heart withered before he again found a resting place. In all these years of bitter desolation the memory of the music of his bells never left him; he heard it in the forest and in the crowded city, on the sea, and by the banks of the quiet stream in the basin of the hills; he heard it by day, and when night came, and troubled sleep, it whispered to him soothingly of peace and happiness. One day he met a mariner from over the sea, who told him a story of a wondrous chime of bells he had heard in Ireland. An intuition told the artist that they were his bells. He journeyed and voyaged thither, sick and weary, and sailed up the Shannon. The ship came to anchor in the port near Limerick, and he took passage in a small boat for the purpose of reaching the city. Before him the tall steeple of St. Mary's lifted its turreted head above the mist and smoke of the old town. He leaned back wearily, yet with a happy light beaming from his eyes. The angels were whispering to him that his bells were there. He prayed, "Oh, let them sound me a loving welcome! Just one note of greeting, O bells! and my pilgrimage is done!" It was a beautiful evening. The air was like that of his own Italy in the sweetest time of the year, the death of the spring. The bosom of the river was like a broad mirror, reflecting the patines of bright gold that flecked the blue sky, the towers, and the streets of the old town, in its clear depths. The lights of the city danced upon the wavelets that rippled from the boat as she glided along. Suddenly the stillness was broken. From St. Mary's tower there came a shower of silver sound, filling the air with music. The boatmen rested on their oars to listen. The old Italian crossed his arms and fixed his streaming eyes upon the tower. The sound of his bells bore to his heart all the sweet memories of his buried past: home, friends, kindred, all. At last he was happy—too happy to breathe. When the rowers sought to arouse him, his face was upturned to the tower, but his eyes were closed. The poor stranger had breathed his last. His own *chef-d'œuvre* had rung his "passing bell."—*Harper's Magazine*.

CALORIC ENGINES.—The engine invented by Mr. F. Brown, of New York, consists of a fuel reservoir combined with a hot-air furnace, and of an air-jacket combined with doors leading one into the combustion chamber and the other into the ash-box of the furnace, and of a packing combined with a cylinder and plunger, the latter being provided with a concave bearing combined with a knuckle on the end of the piston rod, which fits the said concave bearing, forming a receptacle for oil; and, lastly, of an air-escape channel combined with an air pump which branches from the air channel leading to the air furnace.

"To the West."

IT has been said that the charm of any book, and also—or shall we say therefore?—its success, depends to a great extent on the varied nature of its contents, inasmuch as the greater the variety the more numerous will be the separate classes of readers who will find some attraction in its pages—something which echoes their own sentiments or opinions, or some information on that especial branch of knowledge which forms their favourite recreation or employment, as the case may be. This quality is, as a rule, essentially wanting in books of travel, or records of hunting expeditions, which so frequently weary us by their monotony; and though we are given to excusing this fault on the ground that the writer does not profess to be a literary man, but has done his best simply to record his adventures, that does not lessen the wearisomeness of perusing the repetitions of his daily routine, of short journeys over the same style of country, in pursuit of the same animals. Those, however, who object to wading through such volumes as these, need not fear to find this prosiness in Lord Dunraven's account of his visit to "The Great Divide," as the principal watershed of North America has been named; for though the author begins by warning his readers that he never by any chance meets with anything that can be classed as an adventure, he has succeeded in investing the account of his journey amongst the little known regions of the far West with an amount of real interest which a more florid account of hairbreadth escapes and successful hunting would fail to excite.*

We have first a minute description of the various routes by which the locality of "The Great Divide" may be reached, as well as the description of the actual one taken by the earl and his party; and also a most interesting account of the Crow Indians or Absaraka, through whose country the route of our travellers lay. These Indians, simple as they may appear in some respects, are by no means deficient in reasoning powers, if we may judge from an account of some of their speeches at a meeting with the representatives of the American Government; neither are they neglectful of their personal appearance according to their own ideas of what is becoming. We quote Lord Dunraven's views of the vanity of these Indians, and give an illustration from the book of a young dandy of the tribe whom it was his fortune to see fully equipped:—

"Nothing tickles the fancy of an Indian so much as to be stared at by a white man. His vanity is gratified; he sees that he has made an impression, and it never enters into his head that the impression could be anything but favourable. The sole end and object of his existence, the point on which all his thoughts and energies are concentrated, is to appear formidable to his enemies and attractive to the women. If he can scare his foes by the hideousness of his war-paint and the ferocity of his appearance, he is delighted, because he may, perhaps, without risk to himself, shoot one of them in the back while running away; and having done so, he and his friends would scalp the body, and kick it, and dance round it, and stamp upon it, and abuse it, and stick it full of knives and arrows,

and have a 'gay old time' generally; and then go home and be afraid of the dead man's ghost. At any rate, he would argue that even if he killed no one he would not be killed himself, which would be a highly satisfactory reflection to his selfish mind. And if he sees that the bright vermilion partings of his hair, and the carefully designed and artfully painted stripes and patches on his face and chest are making an impression; if shy glances of approval note the swing of his gay blanket and the style of his leggings; and if soft eyes brighten at the sight of his shell earrings and the silver plates in his back hair, he is also delighted, because—well, for the same reason anybody else would be. In short, he is the greatest coxcomb on the face of the earth, not to be surpassed even in London for inordinate vanity, stupendous egotism, and love of self. His features may not be entirely classical, according to our standard of beauty; his cheek bones might be considered somewhat too prominent, and his paint certainly is inadmissible with us; but, to do him justice, I must allow that he is not a bad-looking fellow in his way. Take, as an example, a young warrior of the Bannacks, whom I saw riding through a street in Virginia City from their camp in the neighbourhood. Smooth and easy as a hawk's flight he sweeps along, sitting his foam-flecked mustang with the yielding gracefulness of a willow bending to the breeze, swaying his lithe body with every bound of the animal beneath him. Before him, across the pommel of his saddle, he bears his rifle, in embroidered elk-skin cover, adorned with long fringes, which, mingling with the horse's mane and the tags and tassels of his gay leggings, spread out behind him on either side. His long black hair, plaited and tied with knots of scarlet ribbon, streams out in the wind, and, uniting with the horse's tail, seems almost to touch the dust. Slung across his back are his lion-skin quiver and his bow; by his side hangs a revolver, silver-mounted, and shining in the sun. With the toes of his beaded moccasins he touches the loops that serve him for stirrups; his left hand lightly holds the bridle, and from his right wrist hangs by a thong his buckhorn-handled quirt or whip. As he gallops down the street, all his gay trappings fly out in disorder behind him; and when with a pull at the cruel Spanish bit he steadies into a walk, the folds of his scarlet blanket settle down and hang gracefully from his shoulders; and he passes, an embodiment of savage life, full of wild beauty and bright colour, and no doubt attractive to the female eye—glancing with supreme and undisguised contempt upon the plug hat, black store coat, and pants of some newly arrived representative of civilization."

But, as we have hinted, the book is not merely an account of the route and of the Indians—the lover of nature will find in it vivid descriptions of scenery, which could only have been penned by an appreciative hand; the geologist will find contributions to his stock of information; while a lover of the science of geography will find a fund of interesting matter relative to the hot springs or geysers of the region, which appear to be almost if not quite the largest and most important known. We extract a vivid description of the neighbourhood of these hot springs:—

"You pass a translucent, lovely pool, and are nearly pitched into its hot azure depths by your mule, which violently shies at a white puff of steam maliciously

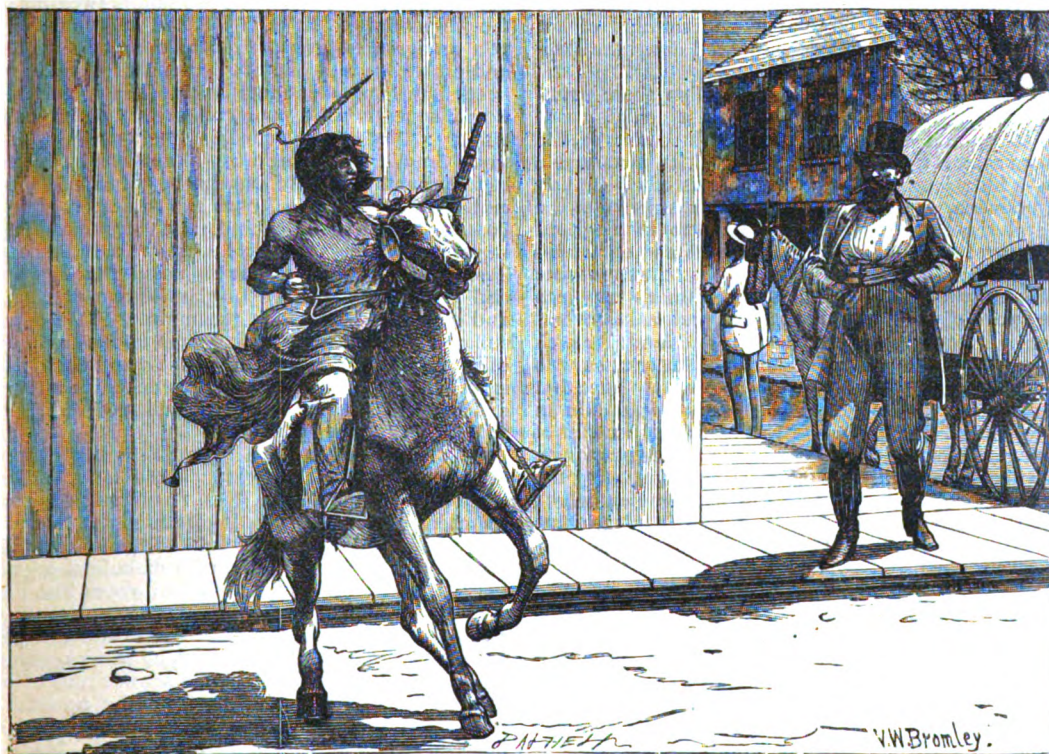
* "The Great Divide." By the Earl of Dunraven. Chatto & Windus.

spitten in its face through a minute fissure in the path. You must needs examine into that ragged-mouthed cavern, and start back with more agility than grace to escape from a sudden flood of hot water, which spitefully, and without warning, gurgles out and wets you through. The air is full of subdued, strange noises; distant grumbings, as of dissatisfied ghosts, faint shrieks, satirical groans, and subterranean laughter, as if the imprisoned devils, though exceedingly uncomfortable, were not beyond being amused at seeing a fresh victim approach. You fancy you can hear the rattle of the loom, the whirl of wheels, the clang and clatter of machinery; and the impression is borne

caused us to drop tea pot and pannikin, and tumble out of the tent in half no time.

"It was getting dark, but there was quite enough light to see that the fit was upon the imprisoned monster. We ran upon the platform, close to the crater; but were very soon driven from that position, and forced to look on humbly from a distance.

"Far down in his bowels a fearful commotion was going on. We could hear a great noise—a rumbling as of thousands of tons of stones rolling round and round, piling up in heaps and rattling down again, mingled with the lashing of the water against the sides, as it surged up the funnel and fell again in spray. Louder



A NOBLE SAVAGE IN TOWN.—(Page 30.)

upon the mind that you are in the manufacturing department of Inferno, where the skilled hands and artizans doomed to hard labour are employed. I can compare it only to one's feelings in an iron foundry, where one expects every moment to step on a piece of hot iron, to be run through the stomach by a bar of white, glowing metal, to be mistaken for a pig and cast headlong into a furnace, or to be in some other way burned, scalded, or damaged."

As to the geysers themselves, the earl's party were so fortunate as to see one of the largest, "The Castle," in a state of eruption. The spectacle is thus described:—

"Scarcely had we got things fixed and supper under weigh, when a yell from Boteler, 'He's going to spout!'

and louder grew the disturbance, till with a sudden qualm he would heave out a few tons of water, and obtain momentary relief. After a few premonitory heaves had warned us to remove to a little distance, the symptoms became rapidly worse; the row and the racket increased in intensity; the monster's throes became more and more violent; the earth trembled at his rage; and finally, with a mighty spasm, he hurled into the air a great column of water.

"I should say that this column reached, at its highest point of elevation, an altitude of 250 ft. The spray and steam were driven through it up to a much greater elevation, and then floated upward as a dense cloud to any distance. The operation was not continuous, but

consisted of strong, distinct pulsations, occurring at a maximum rate of seventy per minute; having a general tendency to increase gradually in vigour and rapidity of utterance until the greatest development of strength was attained, and then sinking again by degrees. But the increase and subsidence were not uniform or regular; the jets arose, getting stronger and stronger at every pulsation for ten or twelve strokes, until the effort would culminate in three impulses of unusual power.

"The column of water appeared quite perpendicular, and was constantly ascending, for long before one jet had attained its greatest elevation another had been forced through the aperture; but in the column the different efforts were plainly visible. The volume of water ejected must have been prodigious; the spray descended in heavy rain over a large area, and torrents of hot water, six or eight inches deep, poured down the sloping platform."

Besides these items of solid information, there is running through the whole volume such a genial, good-humoured, and in parts humorous, account of the various minor (?) troubles and difficulties inseparable from a long journey beyond the bounds of civilization and of roads, as cannot fail to prove attractive to the general reader. Altogether we have to thank Lord Dunraven for a thoroughly well-written and entertaining volume; one which will, we doubt not, tempt some of its readers to extend their next summer's trip into the regions of the Rocky Mountains, and make several others wish they could spare the time and funds for such an expedition. In the interests of the latter class, who are unable to follow in his steps, we can only hope that wherever the earl's love of travel may lead him in future, he will not fail to give us as full an account of his wanderings as he has done in the present instance. We will conclude with one more extract, illustrating the difficulty of managing a troop of pack mules, which form the only mode of transit in these wild regions. The packing, as well as various other scenes, is most admirably portrayed by the pencil of Mr. Valentine Bromley.

"Nothing is so abominably temper-trying as journeying with pack animals. Some of the beasts will not feed if they are picketed; and as it is essential they should eat well, you picket one or two only, and turn loose the rest. You have a long way to go, we will suppose, and get up early in the morning, determined to make a good day's march, and, while the cook is getting breakfast, send a man off to drive in the stock. The rest of the party strike the tents, make up the bundles, eat their breakfast, and then begin to wax impatient, and wonder what has become of the man and the beasts. Presently he comes in with the pleasant intelligence that three-fourths of the stock have left, that he cannot see them anywhere, and that the ground is so hard he cannot trail them. Off you all go, some on foot, others mounted on the remaining horses, and in two hours' time or so the runaways are found and driven in. It is needless to say that they had abandoned very fine pasture, and wandered many miles to find grass not half so good.

"Well, this delay has not tended to improve your temper, and the beasts have to be caught, and that is no easy job, and a good deal of kicking and cursing takes place. At last they are all secured, and you proceed to pack.

"A man stands on each side of the mule to be operated upon; the saddle, a light wooden frame, is placed on his back and securely girthed, and a long rope is looped into proper form and arranged on the saddle. The side packs are then lifted into position on each side of the saddle and tightly fastened; the middle bundle is placed between them, a few spare articles placed on top, a tent is thrown over all, and the load is ready to be secured. The rope is so fixed that the fall, as it were, is on one side and the slack is taken in on the other. Each man places one foot against the pack or the animal's ribs, and, throwing the whole weight of his body into the effort, hauls with all his strength upon the line—one pulling on the fall, the other gathering in and holding all the slack, like two sailors sweating down the jib-purchase. At each jerk the wretched mule expels an agonized grunt, snaps at the men's shoulders, and probably gives one of them a sharp pinch, which necessitates immediate retaliation. The men haul with a will, squeezing the poor creature's diaphragm most terribly: 'Nothing like clinching them up tight,' as they say. Smaller and more wasp-like grows his waist; at last not another inch of line can be got in, and the rope is made fast. 'Bueno!' cries the muleteer, giving the beast a parting spank behind, which starts it off, teetering about on the tips of its toes like a ballet dancer. The unfortunate beast has assumed the appearance and proportions of an hour-glass—large at each end, and exceedingly small in the middle. The apparent sufferings of that mule arising from undue compression of its digestive apparatus are pitiable to behold; but it is all 'kid'—the heart of a mule is deceitful altogether, and in an hour's time that pack will require tightening again.

"Having done with one animal, the packers proceed to the next, and so on through the lot. While you are busy with the others, Nos. 1 and 2 have occupied themselves in tracing mystic circles in and out, among and round and round several short, stumpy, thickly branching firs; and having, with diabolical ingenuity, twisted, tied, and tangled their trail-ropes into inextricable confusion, are standing there patiently in their knots. No. 3, on whose back the brittle and perishable articles have been entrusted, he being regarded as a steady and reliable animal of a serious turn of mind, has acquired a stomach-ache from the unusual constriction of that organ, and is rolling over and over, flourishing all four legs in the air at once. No. 4, who carries the bedding—a pack bulky but light, and measuring six feet in diameter—has thought to run between two trees only five feet six inches apart, and, hopelessly jammed there, is trying vainly to back out stern first. She is a persevering creature, and will in time back herself out of the pack altogether. Nos. 5 and 6, fidgeting and twisting about as only mules can do, come into violent and unexpected collision with each other behind, and with ears laid back, and tails tucked between their legs, are squealing and letting fly as if they never expected to have another chance of kicking in this world. It is no use interfering—nothing will stop them. You may use language strong enough to split a rock, hot enough to fuse a diamond, without effect; you may lay hold of the trail-ropes and drag as hard as you like, but you might as well catch the tail end of an express train and expect to stop it. It is wiser to refrain from all active intervention; for possibly you may be

kicked—certainly you will be knocked down and dragged about the place in a sitting posture, to the great destruction of your pants. You may, and of course you do, curse and swear your 'level best;' but it does not do a bit of good. Go on they will, till they kick their packs off; and then they must be caught, the scattered articles gathered together, and the whole operation commenced afresh.

"At last things are all fixed. Boteler leads off on his riding horse, old 'Billy,' for the mules know him, and will follow him anywhere; and the pack animals straggle after. We take a careful look over the place lately occupied by our camp, to see that nothing is left behind; coil up our lariats, tie them behind the cattle, take our rifles, swing into the saddle, and spread out in open files, some behind, some on the flanks,* to keep the cavalcade in order. All goes very nicely for awhile; the beasts are plodding along, very slowly, it is true, for some will wander, while others will stop to graze; when suddenly Satan enters into the heart of the hindmost animal. A wild ambition fires his soul; he breaks into a trot, and tries to pass to the front. A tin bucket begins jangling on his back; he gets frightened at the noise, and breaks into a canter. The bucket bangs from side to side; all the small articles in the pack rattle and shake; an axe gets loose, and the handle drops and strikes against his ribs; he fancies that there must be something alive upon his back, hurting and belabouring him—something that must at any price be got rid of. A panic seizes him, and, wild with fright, he breaks into a wild gallop. Yells of entreaty, volleys of oaths, are hurled at him; two of us try to cut him off, and only add to his terror and make matters worse. The pack begins to slip over his tail; mad with ungovernable fear, blind with terror, he kicks, squeals, and plunges. A saucepan flies out here, a lot of meat cans there; a sack of flour bursts open, and spills its precious contents over the ground; the hatchet, innocent cause of all the row, is dangling round his neck; a frying-pan is wildly banging about his quarters; until at last he backs himself clean out of the whole affair, and, trembling and sweating with fear, stands looking on the havoc he has wrought, and wondering what on earth the noise was all about."

Sketches of the Central Wilds.

BY A WALKING WALLABY.

VI.—STRIKING AT THE ROOT.

A MONTH or two slipped by, when, one day that the settlers had been busy away in different parts, Harry came back to the hut, to find everything in disorder. Provisions were taken, meal tubs opened, and flour scattered about; boxes broken open or lids smashed in, and every trace left of a marauding party having been busy and gone off loaded.

It was terribly disheartening to gaze upon the waste and mischief, but Harry tried to bear it stoically, telling himself that he could not be constantly gathering the roses of prosperity without getting a prick or two from the thorns. However, he determined to take precautions; so the next day two men stopped in the hut to watch, for a well-marked trail leading right off into the bush had been found by Joe, and on following it up several little things were discovered that had been

dropped in the hasty flight of the marauders. In one place, too, there was a large patch of flour amongst the grass; farther on, sugar; and in another spot, a little heap of rice—enough of each to make their owner rage at the wanton destruction and waste, as he foresaw that many such forays would form as certain a way of annihilating them as spear or club.

The men lay in wait that day, well armed, and again upon the following day, but no one came to the hut; so as it was a busy time just then, for the next week Harry watched alone, his followers undertaking that at the sound of gunshot or cooeey, all were to come back to his aid, and make straight for the hut.

But the days passed without his being disturbed; for either the natives had gone right off, or else they cunningly divined that they were watched, and so never came near.

At the end of a fortnight there was so much to do that Harry could stop back no longer, and with a suspicion in his own mind that Jerry had played them false—bringing up some of his own tribe, and from his knowledge of the place, and the habits of its occupants, taking advantage of them—Harry had the hut well barricaded and secured outside, and then went off with the rest to hunt up some stray cattle.

That night, when they came back, tired and in want of rest and refreshment, to his great annoyance Harry found that the hut had been entered, and a fresh onslaught made upon the meal, of which as much had been wasted as taken.

It was terribly annoying, and Harry mentioned his suspicions to the old shepherd; but Joe shook his head, and said that he thought not—that it was not Jerry, but the blacks.

"I don't think Jerry would rob us, sir," said Joe. "Depend upon it, he'll be back to the old spot one of these days."

But Jerry did not come back, and Harry still held to his suspicions; for it was not likely that any old convicts would have got so far up the country; while, if the plundering had been due to such hands, they would have taken powder and shot, and other things attractive to a European, which here remained untouched.

And at last it came to this, that in spite of searching for some distance round, and risking spear and club, the hut could never be left without being plundered in the settlers' absence; and, as if to prove the correctness of Harry's suspicions, they came back early one day to find that another foray had been made, and inside the hut, coolly and comfortably, Jerry was seated upon one of the meal tubs, in his favourite position, chin upon knees, legs embraced, and his spear leaning against his arm.

"Just as I thought!" exclaimed Harry, in a rage; "then we've caught the rascal at last."

"No," said Jerry, without moving, "Jerry come too late. No catch a rascal. Dam black feller run when Jerry come—run like debbles, as Jerry send spear at 'em. You gib Jerry muttons—Jerry hungry, and kedgie fis a morrer."

Harry looked inquiringly at Joe, for he could not believe the black's story; but the old shepherd said, coolly—

"No, sir; not him. He wouldn't try to brass it out like that. Which way did they go, Jerry?"

"You gib Jerry muttons, Jerry show."

They gave Jerry "muttons" in sufficient quantity to satisfy even him, when, sure enough, he pointed out the trail made by a retiring party of barefooted ones. But still Harry was far from satisfied; for even allowing, as the shepherd said was certain, that there had been a party of blacks there, they might belong to Jerry's tribe, and he only have stayed behind. But if Harry was not satisfied, the black seemed to be perfectly so, when he had picked his mutton bone and devoured a quantity of damper, a description of food that he could put away wholesale. Then, looking very sleepy, he said, to the great amusement of the men—

"Jerry come back again."

"We can see that, old man," said Joe; "and how did you leave the missus?"

"Jerry been to see gin, and stay with Jerry tribe. Now want um clothes again."

So Jerry's garments were routed out, when he donned them, curled himself up by the dogs, and went fast asleep.

Harry thought long and seriously that night upon his losses, which in the aggregate began to be severe, and his suspicions still rested upon the black; but by keeping his thoughts to himself he still hoped to trap him, cunning as he was. But as time slipped by, and Jerry had fallen into his regular duties—catching fish, tracking strays, shepherding, and cattle driving—Harry's suspicions grew somewhat less strong; sometimes, too, taking the form that the robberies were performed by those of Jerry's tribe, but that while Jerry was in his service his master's goods must be held in respect.

So, to retain the black as long as was possible, he never even hinted at his suspicions, but treated him with uniform kindness, so that from being very lean at his return, Jerry turned smiling, his skin shone, and he became somewhat Falstaffian and out of proportion in front.

But just as Harry's mind was growing once more at peace with things in general, to his great annoyance there occurred two more forays, when the hut was broken into, and the tubs terribly robbed; and this time, too, suspicion seemed to fall upon Jerry, who was the first back at the scene of the robbery, after fetching up some strays.

"Dam black fellers. No good," said Jerry laconically, as soon as he saw the mischief.

"It's some of your confounded rascally tribe, Jerry," exclaimed Harry in a rage, "and you must have put them up to it."

For a few moments Jerry was at a loss to understand Harry's idiomatic language, but he seemed to make out the drift at last, as he said—

"No, no—Jerry tribe gen'lems; nebber steal nuzzing at all. Dam black fellers. Look dar—track."

And, going down on hands and knees, he pointed out footprints, and, followed by Harry and the shepherd, he traced the marauders step by step right to the scrub, which they decided that it would not be prudent for them to enter, since it might contain enemies in ambush. So Harry and his companions returned to the hut, the former tired and dispirited, for it was like aiming deathblows at his plans to rob him of the stores of provisions upon which to a great extent they still depended.

"It will never do to sit down and be robbed at this rate," said Harry Clayton; and the old shepherd agreed with him.

But the question was how to put a stop to the plundering. Short-handed already, it was impossible to spare a man to be always on the watch, though that seemed to be an almost certain way of getting out of the difficulty, since the marauders cunningly managed that their visits should only be made when the place was left, and as yet no contrivance had been hit upon that could keep them out. The dogs were always required in the fields, but the only one suitable for the purpose of guardian was the animal that had been speared, and there was not much likelihood of his facing a native again, though he would sometimes sneak round Jerry and attack him behind.

"I do know a way by which you might get riddy of 'em, sir," said the old shepherd—"a way as was tried once and answered; but though I mortally hate the blacks, it seems too cowardly and cruel a fashion. I'm ready for a fair stand-up fight any day," he said, tapping his rifle; "but pison don't seem quite the thing."

"Poison?" said Harry.

"Yes, sir," said Joe. "The blacks used to come just after this fashion to a place I knew of, and rob the meal tubs awful; so what does this squatter do as belonged to the tubs but put in one a lot of strychnine, and killed the poor beggars off by the score. They never came nigh that place any more, only once, when some of the tribe killed a shepherd's wife and two children horribly. But I don't like the pisoning."

"Then why mention it?" said Harry. "Why, it is like treating human beings as if they were rats or wild beasts."

"They served our two poor chaps so," said Joe—gruffly—"speared them as if they had been wild beasts."

"Why can't they leave us in peace?" said Harry—"poor deluded creatures. But I suppose they look upon us as the aggressors for coming upon their land."

"Plenty of room for us, though, sir," said Joe; "and plenty of room for hundreds more, so they needn't turn nasty about that."

"How would it be to fix a pistol so that it went off when they opened the door? We need not load it with ball. The noise would frighten them."

"That's all very well, sir," said Joe, "and very well's as well as it is; but supposing as you fix your pistol by the door, they'll come in at the windy—fix it at the windy, and they'll come in at the door, or somewhere else. But that wouldn't be no good, sir, they're too cunning to be frightened that way; and, bless you, sir, they always watch when they're coming down, and see us all off clear first."

"But do you feel convinced that Jerry has nothing to do with it?" said Harry; "he has struck working."

"He—Jerry? No, not he, sir," said Joe. "Old Budgy is as faithful a fellow as can be, and would do anything for you, sir, depend upon it."

Harry did not feel so satisfied, but the matter dropped.

But there was somebody else not satisfied, and that was the before-named Jerry, who, connected with the plundering or not, began to stand upon his dignity. It is useless to say that he looked black, for that was his

customary tint, but he turned sulky, and even went so far as to refuse some mutton, and evince a disposition to go off into the woods again; while, as he took no pay, he could not be compelled to work, and in many ways he continued to raise Harry's suspicions, as he showed that he considered his tribe had been insulted in his proper person; when, as he said, his tribe were "all gen'lems."

And so matters stood, Jerry refusing to be on friendly terms, but hanging about, now here and now there—"kedging fis," or showing an occasional appearance, or taking wild honey by notching trees with his stone tomahawk, sticking his toes into the notches, and so climbing up till in a position to take the comb. One way and another, he managed to live independently, and troubled not his civilized neighbours, whom he treated with a dignity that was at times ludicrous—living in a place where the said neighbours would to a certainty have starved. He was only seen now by fits and starts, and even went so far one day as to give one of the boys a tap on the head with a club, for laughing at his dignified behaviour—not a tap hard enough to break the boy's skull, but sufficient to leave him stunned and bleeding upon the ground.

The men said it served the boy right, but Harry was very much put out about it, and threatened to drive Jerry away altogether, and probably would have done so if it had not been for Joe, who advised him not to be hasty.

But Jerry knew well enough that Harry suspected him, and after his fashion showed it; and though the young man would have been very glad of the black's services, he could not offer to be friendly, and rather gave himself the credit of having checked the proceedings, for there had been of late no more plundering, due, Harry was convinced, to his having taxed the black with his tribe's dishonesty.

Hope told a flattering tale. Harry and Joe came back after a busy day, hot, tired, and worn-out, for they had been performing tasks that should have fallen to Jerry's share, and such as he would have managed with ease.

"If that black rascal had only been true to us," grumbled Harry, "we should have been—Confusion, they've been here again! He must be in it, Joe, and it is of no use for you to say to the contrary."

In effect, the hut had again been entered. The door had been forced off its hinges, and flour lay scattered about, though none seemed to have been carried away.

"It's really enough to make a man do something to the meal, I declare it is," exclaimed Harry, in a rage. "If I could only catch the scoundrels! Where's that black rascal—where's Jerry?"

"Aint seen him these three days, sir," said Joe; "but I still can't think him in it, though I should like the thing cleared up."

"I'll have him found, if I try to track him myself," said Harry.

"Jerry ober here," said a familiar voice proceeding from a patch of scrub hard by—"Jerry here."

And then, in the short evening twilight, out stalked the black, spear in one hand, and a ghastly, grinning, decapitated head in the other, which he was carrying coolly enough by its coarse black hair, and offered to Harry.

The Man in the Open Air.

THERE may be those among our readers who would possess the best of guns if they could afford it, and would not grudge even £40 to obtain one as good as that for which Manton once charged £84. Here, then, is a hint which ought to be taken at the ebb, and for which we are indebted to "S." in *The Country*.

"The result of experience," says "S.," "warrants me in stating that to pay more than £25 for a very best gun is a waste of money. Send your gun to one of the fashionable makers in St. James's-street, and get a pair of new barrels fitted to it. When you get them home, send them to one of the other crack makers in the same street, stating that you want a new stock, and when you get your bills you will find that I am not far out."

For very many years the barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*), certainly one of the most welcome occupants of our hedges, lay under the ban of being a description of vegetable witch that insidiously blighted the corn of the farmer. We all, who wander in copse or lane, recognize this interesting shrub, particularly in spring, when covered with its pendant branches of yellow blossoms, or in the fall of the year, when decked out with its ripened scarlet fruit. Still more intimate with the barberry may others be who have tasted its geometrically formed leaves in or about May, when as a salad they impart an agreeable acid taste, somewhat resembling sorrel. The berries are rather too tongue-stinging for most palates; but there are those who, accustomed to acids, prefer them to any other; whilst there are few amongst the old or young who, having once tasted of these berries, preserved or candied with sugar, do not look or ask for them again at dessert or tea. But back to the prejudice of the farmer. A well-known microscopist has recently submitted the "blight" or "rust" of the barberry and the corn to a powerful examination, as well as to chemical tests, and he is said to have found them quite distinct. We would recommend the rust of the wheat and that of the barberry, both of the fungus tribe, as extremely beautiful objects when submitted to a low power of the microscope. The scientific name of the barberry fungus is *Æcidium berberides*.

Those who are near game covers may now hear the pheasant crow, at one period doubted as much by the denizens of towns as the fact of cocks neighing was by the countryman.

What has become of the hogsheads of snails we used to see exposed for sale in Covent-garden Market up to nine o'clock a.m., and then taken out of sight of the more squeamish visitors frequenting the market after that hour? Upon asking after these tubs of *helix* the other day, we were told that their commercial value had far from deteriorated, and that the demand for them was greater than ever, although the prejudice was still extensive, and almost unconquerable. That snails form the finest stock for soup cannot be questioned, and that they enter into many of our most sustaining dishes for the highest in the land is equally tenable. In France, in Hungary, and Germany, there is no such fastidiousness. "The snail, the *Helix pomatia*, is in great demand in Vienna, where sacks of them are regularly exposed for sale in the markets, alter-

nating with sacks of beans, lentils, kidney beans, and truffles."

The *Helix pomatia* has now been long ranked among the British land snails. It is the largest of our land shells, is pretty abundant in some of the southern counties of England, and was introduced by the luxurious Romans, during their residence in Britain. And now is the time that these delicious morsels are in their prime. "Faugh! who would eat a snail?" exclaims the boy with his pin and periwinkle. "How disgusting!" cries the lady, bolting a live oyster. "Preposterous!" sibilates the exquisite, with his mouth full of crab salad. Yet the snail is a cleaner feeder than any of these, and fried in butter, or egg and bread crumbs, is irresistible. No, you could not try it! And yet snails form the foundation of some of your best, most expensive, and luxurious *entrées*. Well, what say you to a dish of land tortoise? You affect turtle soup—send up twice to the tureen for it, against the behests of fashion, and smack your lips after your calipash and calipee, with the squeeze of lemon and savour of cayenne. Let me send you a portion of fricassee of tortoise? No? Listen to what Dr. Bright tells us:—"While in Hungary, I was taken in the evening to see another object of curiosity—the garden kept for the rearing and preservation of land tortoises. The *Testudo orbicularis* is the species the most common about the lake, and the river Szala, which falls into it. Tortoises, likewise, occur in great numbers in various parts of Hungary, more particularly about Gyarmath and the marshes of the river Theiss; and being deemed a delicacy for the table, are caught and kept in preserves. That of Lesztheby encloses about an acre of land, intersected by trenches and ponds, in which the animals feed and enjoy themselves." Will you try a little hedgehog, then? Equally obdurate. And yet how I have seen you indulge in sucking pig!

Things New and Old.

Poisoned Sleep.

Sleep is a boon commonly regarded as priceless; but, observes the *Lancet*, it may be purchased too dearly. Macbeth murdered sleep: a very large and, unhappily, increasing number of well-meaning but misguided persons poison it. The medical profession has a keen interest in the growing practice of habitual recourse to sleep potions, because it is with the connivance of the profession, if not under its specific advice, that these soporific poisons are employed. We think the time has come when some strong means should be taken to clear medicine from the reproach of countenancing the lay use of opium, chloroform, chloral, chlorodyne, and the rest of the sleep-producers. The public should be told that they are playing with poisons. If they escape a so-called "accident" which ends in sudden death, they are scarcely to be congratulated, since, if the body does not die, the brain is disordered or disorganized, the mind enfeebled, the moral character depraved, or evils hardly less deplorable than death are entailed. The consideration may be agonizing, but it is urgent. The sleep produced by these narcotics or so-called sedatives—let them act as they may "on the nervous system directly," or "through the blood"—is poisoned. Their use gives the persons employing them an attack of cerebral congestion, only differing in

amount, not in kind, from the condition which naturally issues in death. There is grave reason to fear that the real nature of the operation by which these deleterious drugs, one and all, bring about the unconsciousness that burlesques sleep, is lost sight of, or wholly misunderstood, by those who have free recourse to poisons on the most frivolous pretences, or with none save the exigency of a morbid habit. Great responsibility rests on medical practitioners, and nothing can atone for the neglect of obvious duty. The voice of warning must be raised instantly and urgently if a crying abuse is to be arrested, and final loss of confidence in drugs avoided.

Inhabitants of New Guinea.

The Papuans are described as being well-made, powerful-looking fellows, literally black, and without the projecting jaws peculiar to the Australian aborigines. Woolly hair growing in tufts, and without a particle of clothing, marked with seams on the shoulders, and their ears split and cut into all kinds of fanciful shapes, and decorated with some bright feather or other coloured material affixed thereto—such is the picture of the New Guinea man of to-day. As usual with most savage tribes, the women do the whole of the work, their lords attending to the fishing, hunting, and fighting required from time to time. The "ladies" have a very scanty girdle round the loins, and when in full evening costume wear garters of gay-coloured feathers. The implements of warfare are bows and arrows, which are described as being startling weapons of their kind, and capable of doing execution at 120 yards. The Papuans are great navigators, performing long voyages in large canoes made from the trunks of the coral tree (*Erythrina*). Wild pigs form the staple article of animal food; the kava root is also indulged in, the natives being well versed in its uses. No indications of cannibalism were observed, nor could the Chevert's people learn through the medium of the interpreters that the horrid practice was indulged in—at all events, on that portion of the island visited. At the same time, skulls formed common ornaments in connection with some of the houses.—*Field*.

Discovery of the "Blue Margaret."

In the church of St. Lambert at Düsseldorf, where an admirable fresco was lately discovered on a wall from which the plaster had been removed, the discovery has now been made of the long-lost stone statue, popularly known as the "Blue Margaret." This figure, which represents Margaret, daughter and heiress of the last male representative of the princely house of Windeck and Berg, who died in 1384, stood till the beginning of the present century in a niche against the wall of the north transept of the church, where the bright colour of the robes made the statue a conspicuous object, and secured for it its familiar designation. In 1816 the figure disappeared, and nothing seems to have been generally known of its whereabouts till it was discovered a short time since within the vault of the Berg family, where it had been deposited on the grave of Duke Wilhelm of Cleves and Juliers. It would appear from the records of the church that the statue had originally been recumbent, with two dogs at its feet, but had, in the course of time, been removed from the monument or sarcophagus on which it lay, and been set upright against the wall of the church.

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER XXVII.—INVITATIONS.

TREVOR returned home in no very enviable frame of mind. The look Tiny Rea had given him troubled him more than he could express, and he felt ready to rail at Fortune for the tricks she had played him. Old Lloyd came, smiling and deferential, into the room with some letters, which his master snatched up and threw on the table.

"In which room are Captain Vanleigh and Sir Felix?"

"I think they're gone up to Tolcarne, sir," said the butler.

Worse and worse: they were evidently liked there, too; and that was the reason why they prolonged their stay, without a word of leaving.

"Is there anything I can get for you, sir?" said the butler.

"No," said Trevor, sharply.

And he walked out of the room, to encounter Mrs. Lloyd, who was ready to smile and give him a curtsy; but he passed her with such an expression of anger that the blood flushed into her face, and she stood looking after him as, with his letters crumpled in his hand, he walked out into the grounds, to think over what he should do.

"I'll send them both away," he thought. "That old woman's insolence is intolerable. It's plain enough. Pratt's right. Where is the little humbug? Out of the way just when I want him. I'll give that old woman such a setting down one of these days—but I have not time now."

He sat very still for a time, thinking of what he should do—Tiny's soft eyes haunting him the while, with their sad, reproachful look.

He had seen very little of her, but, sailor-like, his heart had gone with a bound to her who had won it; and he was even now accusing himself of being dilatory in his love.

"Yes," he said, "I do love her, and very dearly. I'll see her, tell her frankly all; take her into my counsel, and she will believe me. I'm sure she will, and forgive me, too."

"Humph! Forgive me for doing nothing. But I must talk to the old gentleman—propose in due form, ask his permission to visit his daughter, and the rest of it. Heigho! what a lot of formality there is in this life! I think I may cope with her, though. She looked so gently reproachful. I could wait; but no, I mustn't do that. I'll call this afternoon and suffer the griffin."

"But those two fellows, why should they go up this morning? Evident that they did not see the ladies, for they were out. No wonder Van takes to making calls, seeing how I've neglected him and Flick. I wish Pratt were here. Where did he go?"

"Thy slave obeys," said Pratt, who had approached unobserved upon the soft turf. "Should you have liked Van to hear what you said just now?"

"No. Was I talking aloud?" said Trevor.

"You were, and very fast," was the reply.

"But what's the matter, Franky? What's the letter?"

And he pointed to an open missive in his friend's hand.

"It's about that I've come to you," said Pratt. "Read."

Trevor took the note, glanced over it, and found it was an invitation to Mr. Frank Pratt to dine at Tolcarne on the following Friday. This brought Trevor's thoughts back to the letters Lloyd had given him, and he hastily took them from his pocket, to find a similar invitation to the one Pratt had had placed in his hand.

"That's lucky," he said, brightening.

"Lucky—why?" said Pratt.

"Because I want to go. But why are you looking so doleful?"

"Natural aspect, Dick. I only came to tell you I should not go."

"Not go! Why?"

"Because I am going back to town."

"Are you upset, Franky? Is anything wrong? I've been rude, I suppose, and said something that put you out this morning."

"No—oh, no!"

"But I'm sure that must have been it. But really, old fellow, I was much obliged. Franky, you were quite right—it is as you say; so if I said anything when I was hipped, forgive me."

"Dick, old fellow," cried Pratt, grasping the extended hand, "don't talk of forgiveness to me. I have been here too long; this idle life don't suit me, and I've got to work."

"Work, then, and help me through my troubles. I can't spare you."

"Dick, old fellow, I feel that I must go. Don't ask me why."

"No, I won't ask you why," said Trevor, eyeing him curiously; "but, to oblige me, stay over this Friday, and go with me to the dinner."

Pratt hesitated a moment.

"Well, I will," he said; and the conversation ended.

During the intervening days, Trevor was too much excited to say anything to Mrs. Lloyd. He called at Tolcarne twice, but the ladies were out. He tried every walk in the neighbourhood, but without avail; and at last, blaming himself bitterly for his neglect of his guests, and thinking that the opportunity he sought must come on the Friday, he determined to try and make up for the past by attending to Vanleigh and Landells.

"I'll talk to Lady Rea about it—that's how I'll manage," he said. "She's a good, motherly soul, and will set me right, I'm sure. I know—tell her I want advice and counsel; ask her to help me counteract Mrs. Lloyd's designs."

Trevor laughed over what he considered the depth of his plans, and after dinner that night was in excellent spirits, losing thirty guineas to Vanleigh in a cheery way that made Pratt shudder for his recklessness, and bite his lips with annoyance at the cool manner in which the money was swept up.

"By the way," said Trevor, as they sat smoking, "what do you say to a sail to-morrow?—the yacht's in trim now, and the weather delightful."

"Thanks—no," said Vanleigh. "I don't think we can go, eh, Landells?"

"Jove!—no; drive, you know, with the old gentleman."

Trevor looked inquiringly from one to the other.

"Fact is," said Vanleigh, coolly, "Sir Hampton Rea has asked us to join him in a little picnic excursion to the north coast—drive over, you know, to-morrow. Yes, Thursday," he said, looking at his little note-book—one which usually did duty for betting purposes—"Yes, Thursday, and Friday we all dine there, of course."

"Yes, of course," said Trevor, in a quiet, constrained way, which made Sir Felix, who had already felt rather hot and confused, colour like a girl.

"Mustn't mind our running away from you so much, Trevor," continued Vanleigh, with a smile, which the former felt carried a sneer, and an allusion to his own playing of the absentee. "Fact is, the old gentleman seems to be rather taken with Flick here."

"Sure you, no," said Sir Felix, excitedly; "it's the other way, Trevor. Makes no end of Van, showing him over grounds, asking 'vice, you know, and that sort of thing."

"I am glad you find the place so much more agreeable than you expected," said Trevor, gravely.

"Never s' jolly in m' life, Trevor," said Sir Felix, excitedly, and speaking nervously and fast. "Fine old fellow, S' Hampton. Fitting up b'liard-room. 'L have game after come back."

"Take another cigar," said Trevor, and his voice was very deep, as he seemed now to be exerting himself all that he could to make up for his past neglect to those whom he had invited down as his friends. "Vanleigh, you are taking nothing."

"I'm doing admirably, dear boy," said the captain, in the most affectionate of tones; and then to himself—"What does that little cad mean by watching me as he does?"

He smiled pleasantly, though, all the while, and when, to pass the time away, and conceal his trouble, Trevor once more proposed cards, the captain condescended to take "that little cad" as his partner, and between them they won fifty pounds of Trevor and Sir Felix—the latter throwing the cards petulantly down, and vowing he would play no more.

"Good night, dear boy," said Vanleigh, rising and yawning a few minutes after smilingly taking his winnings. "It's past one, and we shall be having our respected friend, Mrs. Lloyd, to send us to bed."

A sharp retort was on Trevor's lip, but he checked it, and with a courtesy that was grave in spite of his efforts, wished him good night, saying—

"There is no fear of that; Mrs. Lloyd and I understand each other pretty well now."

"Ya-as, exactly," said Vanleigh; and he went out, whistling softly.

"Good night, Trevor," said Sir Felix, in turn. "Fraid we're doocid bad comp'ny. Too bad, I'm sure, going 'way as we do."

"Good night, Flick," said Trevor, smiling; and then, as the door closed, he turned to find Pratt leaning against the chimney-piece, counting over his winnings. "Well, my lad!" continued Trevor, trying to be gay.

"Thirty pounds, Dick," said Pratt, laying the money on the table. "I sha'n't take that."

"Nonsense, man," said Trevor; "keep it till Van wins it back. But what's the matter? Have you found another of your mare's-nests?"

"I was thinking, Dick," said Pratt, gravely, "that you must be very sorry you asked any of us here."

Trevor's lips parted to speak; but without a word he wrung his friend's hand, took his candle, and hastily left the room.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—BEFORE DINNER.

IT was a busy day at Tolcarne, that of the dinner party. The picnic had not been a success. In fact, at one time, when very much bored by the attentions of Vanleigh, Tiny had gazed out to sea at a pretty little yacht gliding by, and longed to be on board—innocent, poor girl! of the fact that Dick Trevor was lying on the deck with a powerful lorgnette, seeing the party distinctly, and plainly making out the captain leaning on the rock by her side.

Fin, too, was no wiser—though, for quite a quarter of an hour, Frank Pratt was gazing, with knitted brow, through a second lorgnette at the little rocky cove where Sir Felix Landells was pestering her with attentions, and evidently labouring under the impression that unless she partook of lobster salad every five minutes she must feel faint.

Aunt Matty was the only really happy person in the party. She had, to the dismay of all, announced her intention of going, feeling sure that the change would benefit Pepine; and the way in which Vanleigh and Landells tried in emulation to gratify her whims, was most flattering to her.

Not that she was deceived by the attentions, and imagined them extorted by her charms; she knew well enough the visitors' aims, and was gratified at their discernment.

"They know how much depends upon my opinion," she said to herself; and she smiled graciously upon them both as one carried Pepine down the rocks, the other her shawl, and gave his arm; ending by playfully sending them afterwards to the girls.

"Old girl's warm, I know," said Vanleigh to himself.

"We must keep in with the old nymph, Van," said Sir Felix to him at the end of the day; just about the same time that Tiny was crying silently in her bedroom, and Fin striding up and down like a small tragedy queen.

"He's a born idiot, Tiny!" she exclaimed; "and what pa can mean by making such a fuss over him, and telling me it's a proud thing to become a lady of title, I don't know. Ahem!—Lady Landells—fine, isn't it? I don't see that our ma's any happier for being Lady Rea."

"Papa seems infatuated with them," said Tiny, bitterly.

"Yes; and when he found that black captain paying you such attention, I saw him smile and rub his hands."

"Oh, don't, Fin!" exclaimed Tiny, shuddering.

"I believe he's a regular Bluebeard. Look at the little blue-black dots all over his chin. I shouldn't be at all surprised if he's got half a dozen wives in a sort of Madame Tussaud's Blue Chamber of Horrors, preserved in waxwork."

"Pray don't be so foolish, Fin."

"Foolish? I don't call it foolish to talk about our future husbands."

"Fin!" cried her sister.

"Well, you see if that isn't what pa means! I saw Aunt Matty smirking about it and petting the captain; and ma was almost in tears about their goings on."

"Oh, Fin! don't talk so," said Tiny, sadly; "I shall never marry."

"Till you say yes at the altar, and the bevy of beautiful bridesmaids dissolve in tears," laughed Fin. "I say, though, Tiny, I'm not going to be bought and sold like a heroine of romance. I wouldn't have that Sir Felix—no, not if he was ten thousand baronets; and if you listen to Bluebeard, Tiny, you are no sister of mine."

"Do you think papa seriously thinks anything of the kind?"

"I'm sure of it, dear, and—and—and—oh! Tiny, Tiny—I do feel so very, very miserable!"

To the surprise of her sister, she threw herself in her arms, and they indulged in the sweet feminine luxury of a good cry, ending by Fin declaring that she shouldn't go back to her own room; and more than once, even in sleep, the pillows upon which the two pretty little flushed faces lay, side by side, were wet with tears that stole from beneath their eyelids in their troubled dreams.

And now the day of the dinner had arrived, and Lady Rea had had such a furiously red face that Sir Hampton told her she ought to be ashamed of herself, and made the poor little woman, who had been fretting herself to death to do honour to his guests, shed tears of vexation.

Next there was a furious ringing of Sir Hampton's bell, about six o'clock, and a demand whether the house was to smell of cabbage like that.

As the odour did not pass away, Sir Hampton sought his lady, who had gone to dress, and again made her shed tears by exclaiming against his mansion being made to smell like a cookshop.

"It's that dreadful prize kitchener, Hampton, dear," said poor Lady Rea. "The smell comes into the house instead of going up the chimney."

"It's nothing of the sort—it's your stupid servants!" exclaimed the knight, and he bounced off to his room to prepare for the banquet.

"I've a good mind to make myself ugly as sin, Tiny," said Fin, pettishly. But she did not, for she looked very *piquante* and sweet in her palest of pale blue diaphanous dresses, while her sister looked very ill in white.

"Why, Tiny, you look quite poorly," cried Fin, in alarm. "Pray, don't look like that, or that wretch Trevor will see that you've been fretting. If he prefers little servant girls to my dear sister, let him have them."

"Fin, dear, you hurt me," said Tiny, simply; and there was such a tender, reproachful look in her sweet eyes that Fin gave a gulp, and, regardless of her get-up, threw herself on her sister's breast.

"I'm such a thoughtless wretch, Tiny; I won't say so any more."

"Please, miss, your par says are you a coming down?" said the maid sent to summon them; and they went down, to find Sir Hampton in so violently stiff a cravat, that the wonder was how it was possible that it could be tied in a bow, and the spectator at last came to the conclusion that it had been starched after it was on.

Aunt Matty had, in her Irish poplin, a dress that was fearfully and wonderfully made, and dated back to about a quarter of a century before. It was of the colour of the herb whose perfume it exhaled—lavender; and every

time you approached her, you began to think of damask—not roses, but table-cloths and household linen, put away in great drawers, in a country house.

This is not a wardrobe style of story, but we must stay to mention the costume of Frances, Lady Rea, who came into the room with her cheeks redder than ever, although she had tried cold water, hot water, lavender water, and every cooling liquid she could think of. She was in peony red—a stiff silk of Sir Hampton's own choice, and she sought his eye, trembling lest he should be displeased; but as he emitted a crackle, produced by his cravat, as he bent his head in satisfactory assent, a bright smile shot across the pleasant face, dimpling it all over, and she exclaimed—

"Lor', my dears, how well you look. There, they may come now as soon as they like."

"Mind your dress, Fanny," said Aunt Matty, austere, as she sat minding her own. "Oh!"

She held up her fan to command silence, as Sir Hampton cleared his throat, chuckled violently, and spoke—

"Er-rum, I think our guests will not find our circle much less attractive than—er-rum!—Ah, here they are!"

The Man in the Open Air.

IN Germany, the cabbage is thought the highest among vegetables, and there a preparation is made with it which would not be at all to our taste. It is kept in a tub till it becomes what we should consider fit only for the pigs; but the Germans think it excellent, and feast on it under the name of *sauer kraut*.

"It is questionable," says G. Nelson, rector of Oakley, in Suffolk, a great authority as a naturalist a century and a half ago, "whether arable land should be cleared of round stones. All stones have salt in them that in some measure improves land; for though it be locked up with sulphur, so that frosts do not make the stones run, yet there is an emission of saline streams." "I have seen," says Dr. Platt, "fields covered with flints and pebbles produce better corn than those where there were none." The colonists who came to Syracuse, after they had cleared the ground of all the stones, could have no corn till they had laid them on again; for which the salt is a better reason than what is brought by Pliny, though there may be some reason in it too—that stones of a round figure keep the seed warm, and so contribute to its nourishment. In latter days another reason has been assigned—that the stones are generally found most on a dry soil, and that they shield the moisture which rises from the earth or falls from the clouds, and thus form so many minute reservoirs. This may be easily seen by the removal of a stone or two from an otherwise dry field, when the soil beneath will be found more or less wet; and it is for this reason that the angler, when in such a locality and short of worms, seeks them under such moist retreats with every hope of success. Otherwise the earth-worm would penetrate far too deep beneath the surface in search of coolness and moisture for those in pursuit of it to follow, even with pickaxe and shovel.

It is not more than 100 years ago that bees were

supposed to bear allegiance to a king, and the notion of a sovereign of the softer sex was scouted by most naturalists. Pliny tells us the bees have kings and officers. They have private councils and public warlike actions. Aristotle says that in a high wind they carry a little stone in their feet, wherewith they poise themselves, and that they delight in a sound, which makes them sit down near it; but La Cerda ascribes this to a fear of the noise. They were said to love the king so entirely that "they never suffer him to go abroad but, as it were, with a guard about him. For they cannot live without a king: if he dies, they presently decay and squander away to nothing. When any bee dies in the hive, the beaters carry him out forthwith and bury him."

In Grew's "Atlas" we find that "the Solan geese sleep with their head under their wings, and one of them always keeps watch, which being surprised by the fowler, the rest are easily taken by the neck one after another. In those islands the birds are so numerous that the inhabitants keep above 20,000 in little houses made for the purpose. It is very remarkable that these birds, the penguin, &c., which build upon rocks, lay but one egg at once, because they are seldom destroyed; and if they were greater breeders, there would not be room enough for the hundredth part of them; whereas inland fowls, especially the domestick, lay many for one sitting, because continually taken for use."

Mr. Martin saith (1694) that a few years before he wrote, "about 160 young whales, the biggest about 20 ft. long, came ashore in one of the Western Islands, in a time of scarcity, and were eat by the inhabitants, who found them wholesome and nourishing. I suppose this was the time when Scotchmen came to Newcastle to buy beans, which they fed upon in the south parts; 800 horse-load per week were carried for several weeks. This was about forty years ago, when there was no want in England."

Mr. Henry Heather Bigg has done some wonders in "Orthopraxy—the mechanical treatment of deformities, debilities, and deficiencies of the human frame;" and amongst others which may be referred to was that by which he, at the command of the Queen, and at her Majesty's personal expense, contrived to supply the various physical wants of the surviving sufferers after the carnage at Inkermann. This, it will be recollected, Mr. Bigg did so successfully as to enable most of these gallant fellows to muster in one of the drawing-rooms of Buckingham Palace, and, after saluting their sovereign, receive from her one of the most graceful and touching speeches which has ever fallen from Royal lips. However, miraculous as was the result of Mr. Bigg's genius, if we are to believe one Dr. Norleigh (who lived in or about 1740), "a Frenchman he met with at Cambray had, after fifteen years' labour, made an artificial head that, by springs and clockwork, uttered whole dialogues with human voice, laughed, and expressed some other affections." Will the time ever arrive when whole men, thus formed and armour-clad, will be sent into the battle-field wound up to the highest pitch of courage, if not of enthusiasm, and achieve a bloodless victory, or fall with shattered springs and disjointed wheels on the stainless grass?

Here is the original tale of the Remora, from a black letter tome, commented upon: "That the tradition had a very early beginning—when little, light boats were the ships then used, to the side whereof this fastening itself might easily make it sway, as the least preponderance on either side will do, and so retard its course; and the story begot upon a boat might still, like the fish itself, stick to it, though turned into a ship—the people assigning as great a power to Neptune on the sea as the poets have done to Apollo, the god of life in the heavens, who appears, by the best accounts of him, to have been no better than a crafty mountebank." Apollo a mountebank! What next? Bacchus a pot-boy, and Juno a dairy-maid!

From a long and most interesting manuscript article upon the stork we take the following:—"When the storks have bred, and their young are fully fledged, the time of their departure drawing nigh, they all to a bird assemble about Haerlem-meer. The first-comers wait for the rest. They stay some days, chattering and making a great noise; in the midst of this noise there is a sudden silence, and upon a signal given they all rise together. They fly in one great flock, fetch many great rounds over the place of meeting, still rising higher and higher, resembling a great cloud, which appears less and less until it quite disappears. Where-soever they rest, one is set to watch whilst the others sleep. It is hard to determine where these and other season-birds take up their quarters."

With as bold a flight as the storks themselves, "a certain author saith there is no place to be assigned for them but the world in the moon, because there is no discovery made below, and they fly directly upwards."

How conclusive is this argument! We are surprised the writer didn't back it with the fact that as the Man in the Moon is always picking up sticks, the penalty of this employment being known to the storks, they resort to that luminary for the stacks of material with which they invariably build their nests. Again, he might have used the fact of the woodcock dropping suddenly down at the same time in all countries, and attributed the name of this long-billed bird to the same timber-collecting lunatic.

Another writer, who is but semi-serious upon this mooning statement, says: "These and other birds change places, as moved by a wonderful instinct, for some agreeable conveniency. But, I suppose, it is too long a journey to the moon, which is distant fifty-two semi-diameters of the earth—that is, 179,712 miles from this globe."

Harris, in his "World," speaking of Iceland, which lies north from the Orcades, lat. 67°, says: "There is a lake that always smokes, and yet is so cold that it petrifies everything that comes into it. Blenkenius saw an experiment try'd upon a piece of wood, which being stuck into this lake, that part of it which was under ground turn'd to iron, so much of it as was cover'd with water turn'd to stone, and the part above water continued wood. The petrifying water in Iceland only changes that part which lies in the mud into a darker colour. On the contrary, although Iceland is in a very cold climate, yet it hath several hot and scalding fountains."

How few of us, little or big boys, can resist throwing stones into the water; and if idling and prone on the shingle by the seaside, the desire is part and parcel of the programme of indolence. But how terrible it would be if our harmless exercise were visited by so great an infliction as that of which we read in an old, dateless book, and which savours almost of a bit from the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. "There is a lake," says our author, "near La Besse, which is so deep it could never be sounded; and when a stone is cast into it, it is said to raise storms of hail, lightning, and thunder. . . . Near Issoire is a lake into which if a stone is cast it raises vapours which dissolve into rain."

Our forefathers did not appear to know much of the bore or eager—a tidal wave now attributed to many rivers: "At Liburn, fourteen miles above Bordeaux, is an irregular tide, which rises in the river all on a sudden, when the water is most calm. It runs a great way up, and overturns all the boats in its way. This is true, however wonderful. And here Rochelle, being besieged by Charles IX. and pressed with famine, shoals of fish, never seen there before, came into the harbour, to the great relief of the inhabitants; and as soon as the siege was raised they went off, and never were seen more."

In the "Wonders of Nature," date 1673, we find: "In the island of Kilda there is a bird called fulmar, of the size of a moor-hen, but it hath a strong bill and wide nostrils, which have a peculiar use, and are formed for the purpose, it is supposed, to pick its food out of live whales, because such stuff is found in its nest, and it is very remarkable that the oil is made in the creature. For when it is approached by any man, it spouts out at its bill a great deal of pure oil in its own defence; and therefore the natives surprise the bird by gins, receive the oil into a vessel, and use it in their lamps. They also use it with success against rheumatick pains and tumours." There is generally a stratum of truth in these dusty *ana*, but it is difficult here to make a guess as to the identification of this bird.

At the above period (1694) the preserved herring was looked upon as a curiosity, for, with some surprise on the part of a writer, we find it observed that in Skye Island, where the cattle feed in winter upon the seaweed, and observe the ebb very exactly to go down to it, there are several bays which abound with herrings, which the natives dry and preserve eight months without salt.

It is Sir Thomas Browne who thus discourses: "Ireland hath this wonderful quality, that it nourisheth no venomous creatures, and Irish wood kills them. It is said they die by the touch of a native, and that any wood stroked by a native doth the same. But of this I want to be further satisfied. However, there is so much certain truth as is a great wonder in nature, and a great work of Providence which makes such a difference in places. Now, it may be asked in reverence, Why hath God created any venomous creatures that are mischievous to mankind, and what is the use of them? There are some of them useful in medicines, and some heal the wounds they have made. There may yet be more uses found. And it is an employment

of mankind to make experiments. It is a work of Providence that assists men's enquiry, when uses are found out by accident, and some good is found where least expected.

"There are divers medicines made out of vipers, and from them Venice treacle is made." Most of the vipers of which Venice treacle is made are sent from Poitiers, and here they make of them the Trochusque, so much esteemed. Among the rarities of the Royal Society there is the slough or skin of an English viper, as it was naturally cast off. They cast them twice a year—namely, at the spring and fall. The separation begins at the head, and is finished in twenty-four hours, and from all parts so entire that the very outward skin of the eye is plainly to be seen. They receive new strength with a new skin. Sir Thomas Brown says, from the experience of credible persons, "that the viper, in case of fear, receiveth her young ones in her mouth, and when the fear is over they return thence again." This, in modern days, has been greatly doubted, as no really certain accredited fact of the kind has yet upon investigation received the necessary confirmation, to place it on the credible archives of natural history. If we might hazard a suggestion, it would be that the instinctive nature of the young of the viper when alarmed is to make for protection towards the mother, and thus, running with a celerity which cheats the eyesight, along the side and partly under their parent, disappear behind her, leaving her to erect herself with a threatening aspect against all pursuers of her offspring. If we are correct, how easily the observer might imagine the young had disappeared down the throat of the mother!

"But the principal end and use of venomous creatures," continues Sir Thomas Brown, "as well as all others hurtful to mankind, is to be a medicine for the mind. From hence they may be made sensible that they are offenders against God, because their bodies are liable to great pains, placed amongst many dangers; and some creatures are not subject to them. But there is also a work of Providence in that we suffer not more from wild beasts. Nature also suggests to us to be careful on all occasions; and that as our care is necessary to preserve the body from harm in this life, so more especially the soul is to be taken care of, lest it fall into greater evils in a future state."

Mermaids have always been favourites, in presumed reality and in fiction. But some of the accounts which we meet with, amongst the literary morsels saved from the moth and the mice, render it somewhat difficult to determine exactly the physical attributes of this interesting creature. We, in common with the Chinese and Japanese, who have a subtle art of forging mermaids, were under the impression that a mermaid consisted of half a woman—being the superior part—and the rest a fish. Yet we find mermaids, in many parchment-covered and worm-eaten tomes, described as dancing on the sands, and "going on anyhow;" indeed, as shamelessly as a parcel of hoydens bathing on Margate beach. The Chinese fabricate these creatures with the section of a mummified monkey, the rest being a dried tail; under which circumstances, to skip about on dry land would, one would think, be outdoing Blondin. However, we should not take a cruse of salt with us into Wonderland, for there, at least, doubt would

spoil all the flavour. We give the following on the authority of Mr. Meyer, who, says his biographer, assures us—"That in 1403, a mermaid was cast ashore near Haerlem, who was brought to feed upon bread and milk, taught to spin, and lived many years." John Gerard, of Leyden, adds, "that she would frequently pull off her clothes, and run towards the water; and that she imitated speech, but it was so confused a noise as not to be understood by anybody. She was buried in the churchyard, because she had learnt to make the sign of the Cross."

He speaks this upon the credit of several persons who had seen her.

"There is near Haerlem a small village," says Block, "famous for an extraordinary birth, and two basons kept in the church in memory of it. The Countess of Henneberg reproved a beggar woman who had three children at a birth, and said she had been dishonest. The grieved woman wished that she might have as many children at a birth as there were days in a year, which accordingly came to pass, and they were no bigger than mice. They were baptized in those two basons, and buried in the said church. The whole history is painted at large, and the basons fixed on each side. This memorial, with other good authorities, testifies to the truth of this story."

"Look at this," says a writer of what is by some called the "musty school." "Look at this! Our cathedral church steeple, Flanders, is so finely carved that a king said it should be put in a case, and only showed on holidays." This is on a par with the notion that the perpendicular revolving mill which once stood at Chelsea was intended as a packing case for the steeple of a neighbouring church, to which Napoleon the First, when in friendly connection with England, had taken a fancy while upon a visit, and which, in consequence, it was said, was forthwith to be transported, with the compliments of the nation, to imperial Paris.

Sketches of the Central Wilds.

BY A WALKING WALLABY.

VII.—A BLACK GENTLEMAN'S CHIVALRY.

"JERRY tribe gen'lems," said the black, with dignity; "Jerry tribe no steal a damper-meal, and Jerry nebber steal nuzzing at all, but kedge fis, and mind sheeps, and track. Dis dam rascal steal a meal. Jerry want show he no thief, and watch so, and den track um."

As Jerry spoke, he held down his head, and then threw himself flat upon the ground, and began to wind about like a serpent, crawling round the tree, and then going through the whole tragedy, showing how he had watched till he saw the savage creep up to the hut and break in.

Then quickly leaping up, and making believe that his enemy was leaving the hut loaded with spoil, he struck an attitude, hurled his spear so that it stuck quivering in a tree, and then rushed up, and imitated the action of hewing off the head which he had brought and handed to Harry, who shrank, shuddering, from the blood-stained trophy.

"Dat how Jerry kill dam rascal thief. Mas' Harry keep head a look at. No steal a meal again."

The story was plain enough without Jerry's illustrations, for the crafty black pointed out where a headless body lay bleeding upon the ground. Hurt by Harry's unjust suspicions, he had watched, as only a savage could watch, meeting cunning with cunning, until the enemy came and watched the party off to their day's labour; while to make more sure, and to disarm suspicion, Jerry had set off himself, as if going back to his tribe, and then returned by a different route, making his way through the scrub for miles upon miles, until he reached a spot where he could see the hut, with the intention of reinstating himself in Harry's good opinion, and proving that, self included, his tribe was composed of gen'lems.

As to the taking of a man's life, that was nothing; and so far from making him uneasy, Jerry was in high glee, shaking hands all round with the men and lads, and indulging in a short triumphal war dance, wherein he made believe to spear every one present, till ceasing in a violent perspiration, he exclaimed—

"Jerry hungry. You gib Jerry much muttons. No eat two day—two."

And he held up a couple of fingers.

"It's of no use to look black at him, sir," said Joe to Harry. "It is his nature to," as the hymn says. "I told you he was faithful, and he has done us no end of a good turn. He believes that he has done a good action, and that now you are the best of friends."

"But it is so horrible, this killing of the poor wretches," exclaimed Harry. "I wish the fellow would go."

"Go? not he, sir. He won't go unless you drive him off; and, true as he has been to us, I don't think that would be wise. You'll excuse me, sir, but you nearly made an enemy of a good friend as it was, and friends is scarce articles out here. If you'll take my advice, sir, you'll set Bill and Jim to bury that body, and let bygones be bygones, treating old Jerry for all the world as if nothing had happened."

"But you don't think we shall be troubled any more after so sharp a lesson?" said Harry.

"Not till next time, sir," said Joe, drily; "without you hang up the body in front of the hut like a scarecrow, to keep the niggers off."

"There, for God's sake set the men to bury the poor wretch," said Harry, shuddering.

And he turned away, leaving Joe to fulfil his commands.

"I knowed it warn't old sootpot," muttered Joe to himself, as he took up the ghastly, grinning head from the ground and looked at it. "Fine set of ivories you had, old chap; and if you'd been 'dustrious enough to have growed your own mutton and flour, you might have lived to have thrashed your gin and used your teeth now. I s'pose you came alone; but there must be some more of your breed not far off, and they'll be here again to-morrow, like ants round a jam-pot, and then that Jerry'll put his spear through another. It's no good for the governor to be squeamish if he comes to settle out in a place like this; and as to bringing that little lass here, as he's always muttering about, why he'd better pison her. It aint live and let live here, but live and let nobody else."

Joe stopped suddenly, for a thought appeared to



[Once a Wee

have struck him. He grinned, looked round carefully to see that he was not observed, then pulling an old red cotton handkerchief from his pocket, he turned his face to the hut, stooped down for an instant, and then plunged into the bush, where he remained out of sight for a few minutes.

Half an hour after, a tolerably deep grave was dug, and the body of the savage laid therein.

"Where's his head?" said one of the men, resting for a moment upon his shovel.

"Couldn't never have had none," said Joe, grimly, "or he wouldn't have come down here to be killed."

only smoked his pipe, and retained his ideas upon the subject.

Satisfied with the success of his scheme, Jerry troubled himself no more about the stores. His character was vindicated, and that was enough for him. The previous night he had thoroughly distended himself with mutton and damper, and then had a good sleep, from which he woke in capital spirits before dawn, to rouse up the men and lads to see him slay the "rarksal black feller" over again; and that day, to use Joe's expression, Jerry "buckled to" at his work, accompanying them to attend the cattle, and strutting



A TRIBE OF GEN'LEMS.—(Page 42.)

"Gammon!" said the man; "why, I seed Jerry have it by the wool."

"There, cover him up," exclaimed Joe; "perhaps he's took it away again, or perhaps the governor wants it."

No more was said, and in a few minutes a low mound in the scrub only remained to show where the body had been placed.

A long consultation ensued that night concerning the probability of the blacks taking this fresh check as a lesson, and leaving the settlers unmolested for the future. Harry was of opinion that they would; but Joe

about and smiling, or rather grinning furiously, to the great delight of all who saw him.

About mid-day, when all was still in the Gully, and Harry and his party were miles away, not a breath of wind to ruffle a leaf, and the sun pouring down his fervid heat, a stooping black figure was seen to dart across a glade about a mile from the hut, and then plunge into a clump of low bushes. First one, and then another dark form, till ten or a dozen had crossed, all stooping and following closely in the footsteps of the foremost, who, avoiding the hut, carefully made his way along till he hit upon the trail made by a part

of Harry's party that morning. Then footprints were examined, both those of men and horses, and carefully counted, when it soon became evident that there was something unsatisfactory, for the party stopped long over the print of a bare foot. Then there was a long, low, chattering conversation, and more counting of footprints; but still there seemed a stone of stumbling in the path, till, hunting about for some time, one of the blacks came upon another trail, where he made out the footprints of two people on foot, and evidently the track of a mounted man, for the horse's hoofs were deeply imprinted.

This was evidently all that they wanted, for the men grinned and chattered again, and then, following their leader, made their way round towards the hut once more, but almost displaying an excess of caution, and keeping beneath the shelter of the low scrub.

At last, when opposite the opening, one of the savages stopped suddenly, and pointed down to where a few drops of blood lay upon the grass beneath a tree, while on looking up it was plain to see that a few twigs were broken.

Starting then towards the hut, but still amongst the low bushes, the black pointed out footprints, which ceased where the earth had been newly dug up, and beyond that again was the trail where something had been dragged along, the grass being here and there streaked with blood, about which flies innumerable were buzzing.

Plenty of chattering now ensued, when following up the track to where the hut stood full in view, they came to where there was another large patch of blood, which seemed to have soaked far down into the deeply stained earth.

But this did not seem to much trouble the blacks, whose eyes were now turned to the hut, which, slowly and carefully, and flitting from tree to tree, they now circled, contriving to gain the shelter of every bush and bit of scrub, so as not to show their dusky bodies; while still and silent around, there seemed nothing to raise their suspicions. Still they did nothing rashly, but advanced step by step, with the caution of those who knew that their lives depended upon their care. Once a black more daring than his fellows made a dash towards the hut, but only to seek cover again directly; when they still went on reconnoitring, until fully satisfied that the place was quite deserted, and no one on the watch, when they darted across the open space, and began hunting for a means of ingress.

Now they tried the doors, then the windows. Two clambered upon the roof; while, as a last resource, after trying hard to get in, some half-dozen lifted a heavy log of wood, ran with it at the door, and dashed it open at one blow, when, dropping their battering ram, with one consent they all dashed back to cover with all the speed they could command.

A little time elapsed, when having once more carefully reconnoitred, they again advanced to the door, their actions throughout having been precisely those of a party of rats bent upon a foraging expedition in a barn. Then peering into the hut with a display of the utmost caution, they entered, and chattering for the first time loudly, began to seize upon everything edible within their reach. They had evidently been there before, and knew the contents of the various tubs in the inner part, used as a store; for one fellow soon

had his hands full of sugar, another was crunching rice, while yet another, grinning and chattering, had approached, bag in hand, the large American meal tub, and removed the lid.

For a few moments he stood as if paralyzed, holding on by the edge of the tub with both hands, his jaw dropped, and trying in vain to fly. He had let fall lid and bag, and stood with distended eyes looking down into the tub. His hands might have been held to the edge by galvanism, to judge from his actions; when, just as they attracted the notice of his companions, still holding on tightly, he bounded up and down three or four times, yelling loudly, and then, as if gaining his liberty, darted through the open door, and ran frantically for the scrub.

His companions huddled together, some levelling spears, some raising stone, axe, or club to strike at the unseen enemy; but as no foe appeared in sight, one who was bolder than the rest thrust sharply with his spear at the tub, but without producing any effect. Then he advanced cautiously, peeped in, dropped his spear, shrieked, and ran as hard as he could go, keeping up the yelling till he was lost to sight amongst the bushes.

As for the rest, with one exception they were between the tub and the door, and made no scruple in rushing off with all their might; but the last one crept back into the farthest corner of the store, yelling with dread, till, in his anxiety to get more out of danger, his spear came in contact with a jar upon a rough shelf above his head, thrust it off, when it came clattering down, making the frightened wretch leap forward into the middle of the store, where he, too, caught a glimpse of the contents of the tub, and running, and tumbling, and shaking with dread, he made his way into the bush, when all was once more still around Harry Clayton's station.

The sun was slowly descending, and cooler breaths of air swept gently over wood and plain. The herbage began to look less limp and faded, and the far west to grow golden and to glow with many a gorgeous colour. But all was still and quiet around—the hut remaining just as the savages had left it; the broken door half open, and a cracked basin lay upon the threshold where one of the fugitives had dropped it, but for any sign of life there might not have been a soul there for a year.

At length there was a cheery whistle to be heard in the distance, and Harry, mounted upon a fine young colt, cantered homewards, with Joe, the old shepherd, on one side, mounted upon a stout cob, and Jerry, spear on shoulder, trotting behind—a couple of dogs completing the party.

"Been again, by Jove!" cried Harry, as he saw the open door. "It's of no use, Joe; we must pull up stakes and be off. I can't stand this sort of thing any longer."

Throwing his reins upon his horse's neck, Harry leaped to the ground and entered the hut, closely followed by old Joe, who seemed to be extra interested, and looked keenly over his master's shoulder.

"All in disorder, of course," exclaimed Harry. "Was ever poor fellow so—why, what the—"

The young man did not finish his sentence, but stepped hastily back against Joe, with a look of real alarm upon his features.

"I thought that would do it, sir," said the old man,

laughing; when once more Harry looked into the open tub before him, but only to turn away shuddering, for there, grinning up at him in a most hideous way—the dull eyes glaring, and the black face smeared with the white meal, against which it stood out horribly—was the decapitated head of the black slain by Jerry, ready to alarm the most stout-hearted who had come upon it suddenly.

"But it was too horrible a plan, Joe," exclaimed Harry, angrily.

"Horrible or not, sir," said Joe, removing the head, and tying it up once more in his handkerchief, "it was a good plan; and look here, sir, they haven't taken a thing, but stampeded off as if shot as soon as they saw this thing seeming to come up at them out of the tub. Look, sir, that basin's where they dropped it; here's sugar spilt all about, and rice; and, what proves it more than all, here's a couple of spears, which they would do anything sooner than part with." And as he spoke he pointed to a weapon lying upon the floor of the store-room, and another leaning against one of the windows. "Now, look here, sir," continued Joe, trying to ward off the displeasure of his master, "here's Jerry, sir, you ask him what he thinks."

Jerry, who had entered the hut with them, and looked quite horrified and ready to run, no sooner had read the elucidation of the mystery than he began to express his delight by slapping his thighs; afterwards examining and poisoning the spears, to see if either of them was better than his own—which, however, seemed to bear well the comparison, for he kept it; and now, upon being appealed to, he exclaimed, grinning hugely all the while—

"Nebber come again now; black fellers tink a bunyip debble a-coming, and run dis far so."

And, to illustrate his meaning, Jerry lowered his head and darted out of the hut "this fashion," but only to come in contact with one of the men who was just returning, so that they both rolled upon the ground, Jerry leaping up first, and slipping off to avoid expected punishment.

But Harry Clayton had had too many disappointments to be hopeful, and he lay down that night overwhelmed and jaded, troubled in mind about the bloodshed, and annoyed with the old shepherd for his horrible plan for attempting to scare the blacks; for though probably efficient, there was something in it so revolting and shocking, in, as it were, trifling with the dead, that Harry lay for hours awake, and picturing the hideous face peering at him from out of the depths of the white tub till he shuddered again and again. Then his thoughts strayed homeward, and he began to calculate how impossible it would be to bring a tenderly nurtured woman out to this beautiful wild. His task out here must be only to save money, and then seek home once more. Then he began to reckon up the progress he had made, and counted, as far as memory would help him, his herds of cattle, till just in the middle of a heavy number of figures he fell asleep.

THERE seems to be no end to the inventive faculties of advertisers. The latest "taking" advertisement to be seen in the London streets is the sandwich man, with the following in large type on his front board: "Don't look on my back." Naturally one's curiosity is excited, and one acts in direct opposition to the request.

From First to Last; or, Gwendoleen's Engagement.

He alone, whose hand is bounding
Human power and human will,
Looking through each soul's surrounding,
Knows its good or ill."

CHAPTER I.

THEY used to say at Rugby that I was Florance Harford's only friend; he certainly had but few. Schoolboys form a tolerably accurate estimate of worth; and at school Harford was decidedly unpopular. His companions voted him selfish and affected; qualities towards which schoolboys are not very tolerant.

Poor old Harford! I knew his shortcomings as well as any one; and yet I was fond of him, in spite of them. His good looks were a great attraction in my eyes, for, like many plain people, I am apt to overrate the advantages of beauty. His features were classically regular, of the Grecian type; his eyes of a deep violet hue, fringed with long dark lashes—an inheritance from an Irish mother; and his complexion warm and brilliant, like a peach that has ripened on a southern wall. I used often to think my schoolfellows were very hard upon Harford, and that they must be jealous of his beauty, whereas they were simply intolerant of his weakness and vanity. He was not celebrated either for a strict regard for truth; in fact, there was no denying that, in spite of his many attractions—his handsome face, his soft voice, and his peculiarly winning manner—Harford was not the character to win the respect or favour of his own sex, for he was decidedly a moral coward.

After leaving Rugby we went to Oxford—or rather, I did, for Harford did not come for a year and a half afterwards. By that time his father was dead, so Florance was free to follow his own inclinations in the choice of a profession, and he intended to become an artist. He had always shown great taste for painting. I suppose he came to Christ Church to be with me; but although I thought it a waste of time and money for an art student, I knew he would be hurt if I said so; so I held my tongue. My old schoolfellow was not more popular at Oxford than at Rugby—rather less so, I think; his vanity was greater than ever, and his tetchy disposition rendered him a perfect nuisance at times. I now quite ceased to envy his good looks, when I saw how powerless they were to win him popularity or friendship. However, I still imagined that with the other sex he must be irresistible, if he chose to exert his powers of fascination; but as yet he was heart-whole and fancy free. Occasionally he would admire a pretty face; but no woman he had ever met, he told me, in any way approached his ideal of womanly beauty or perfection. I don't think that I quite envied Harford's future wife, in spite of my affection for him. All men are selfish—particularly where women are concerned; but he was more selfish than the general run of men, and certainly more exacting.

I was destined for the bar. As long as I remained, Harford stayed; but when I came up to town to eat my dinners, he went to Italy, and it was some time before we met again. He wrote frequently—always in raptures with Italy and the Italians, whom he declared he preferred greatly to his own countrymen. It did not appear to me, however, that he got on with them

better, for I never received a letter from him that did not contain an account of a quarrel of some kind; he was always either offended with somebody or somebody was jealous of him.

I had not heard of him for months, and was beginning to wonder why he did not write, when one morning he rushed in upon me in my chambers in the Temple. By this time I was considered a rising young barrister. My eldest brother had married the daughter of a prosperous solicitor, and the connection had been of great service to me. Glad as I was to see Harford again, his visit was not particularly well-timed, for I was in a hurry that morning. I was going out of town by the three o'clock train, and had some work to finish. However, my visitor would not see that I could gladly dispense with his company just then, and flinging himself into an arm-chair, he began a long story, not about a quarrel this time, but what frequently leads to one—a love affair. He was, he informed me, engaged; but without the consent of the young lady's mother, who disliked him particularly. Of course, she was everything that was bad and despicable (mothers who thwart engagements always are), and they were determined to marry in spite of her.

"Gwendoleen is only nineteen," he said, "and her mother is her sole guardian. She has no father. Now, what do you advise us to do, George?"

I knew my friend of old, and his habit of asking for advice he never meant to follow—unless it coincided with his own wishes—and I had discovered from the commencement of his story that he had determined upon, if he had not already arranged, an elopement; so I discreetly forbore to express any opinion on the subject. He informed me that his innamorata was a great heiress; that she would have three or four thousand a year when she came of age; that her mother (whose name, by the by, never transpired) was a wretch who treated her daughter infamously, and was madly jealous of her—on account of him, he tried to make me infer.

"That woman is a perfect fiend, George," he said; "and leads my poor darling such a life! I can't think how Gwen can have borne it so long. But it sha'n't go on much longer, I am determined. I mean to marry her at once, and take her back to Italy with me."

"Will she go?" I asked.

"Will she go, indeed! She would go anywhere with me. We are madly in love with each other. Ah, George, you can't think how much I am wrapped up in that girl. I never knew what it was to care for any one before. Thank God, she will be mine before another month is past."

"You say she has no father, and is an heiress. If she is a ward in Chancery, you had better take care what you are about."

"But she is not a ward in Chancery. Her mother is her sole guardian, and I don't care a rap for her. She is a bad lot if ever—"

"I say," I interrupted him, "don't you think it rather bad taste to run down your future wife's mother in that way?"

I began to perceive that during his stay in Italy Harford had not lost the habit of being very ill-tongued about women—a trait I particularly dislike.

I managed to get rid of him at length; not, however,

before he had insisted upon reading me a letter of his lady love's—a frank, affectionate, sensible letter, that any man might have been proud to receive from his future wife. It did not impress me, however, with the idea that she was madly in love with Florance, as he had said she was. She appeared to be tolerably fond of him and very unhappy at home—the secret of many a girl's marriage. *Voilà tout!*

"All the madness," I thought, "is probably on Harford's side; although there is a good deal of method in the madness that falls in love with three or four thousand a year. I hope he'll make her a good husband, for I feel certain from her letter that that girl would be a prize for any man, even if she had not a fortune."

I only just managed to catch the three o'clock train. I was going to stay for a few days at Pauncefort, near Midborough, at Sir Samuel Silcote's. Sir Samuel was an old county court judge, who had married a wealthy widow, and their house was one of the pleasantest in the county. I found a jolly party assembled in the library at tea when I arrived, but the Silcotes were loudly deploring the absence of some young lady they had invited.

"I am so sorry about dear G.," I heard Lady Silcote saying to her husband. "Such a shame of her mother not letting her come!"

"Ah, well, my dear," replied Sir Samuel, "you must not forget that the charge of an heiress is a great responsibility."

"Horrid woman!" exclaimed her ladyship, vehemently. "She is as jealous of G. as she can be. I can't bear to see a woman flirting when she has a grown-up daughter. It is disgraceful."

I was just going to ask Lady Silcote who "G." was, for the conversation had aroused my curiosity, when some one at the farther end of the room called me away to ask me my opinion of the great *cause célèbre* of the day. I was to have stayed five days at Pauncefort; but on the morning of the fourth day I received the wildest and most incoherent letter from Harford, imploring me to come to town at once. It was dated the previous day.

"I have to go out of town to-morrow," he wrote, "on important business. I shall only be absent for a few hours, but I cannot possibly be back before four o'clock. Unless you can be at my rooms in Gray's Inn" (he had taken chambers there) "by two o'clock, I shall be ruined. Try and be there by half-past one. Paul, my servant, will admit you, and directly you arrive he will go out for the rest of the day. Wait until somebody comes, and do not leave her for a single moment under any pretext whatsoever till I arrive."

"What did it all mean?" I asked myself. And who was somebody? His *fiancée*, I supposed. How very inconsiderate of him to ask her to come to his rooms in Gray's Inn. I really did not care to lend myself to such a scheme, and but for the girl's sake should certainly have declined. But I pitied her, arriving at a house full of men, very probably not even knowing on which floor Harford's rooms were, to be met by his servant, and to wait three or four hours in solitude until her lover appeared. And so I determined to go to her aid, and left Pauncefort soon after breakfast, much to the regret of my kind host and hostess, who made me promise to return at an early date.

How to get to France.

IN the face of the proposed Channel Tunnel Railway, which is to make a run over to France a matter of the simplest moment, a Mr. P. J. Bishop has issued a *brochure* to show that a tunnel from Dover to Calais would be tremendously expensive, and terribly risky in the course of its construction. He then proceeds to suggest an ingenious plan of his own, which certainly has the advantage of simplicity, and seems a very probable way of solving the difficulty. We borrow very largely from his own words.

Many schemes have been put forward for the purpose of uniting England and France. The first proposed was by Monsieur Mathieu, upwards of seventy-two years ago, and plans were laid before the First Napoleon, then First Consul, and afterwards exhibited at the Luxembourg and public galleries in Paris, but they have long since been lost, and with them the proposed method of carrying out the work.

In the year 1867, at the suggestion of the Emperor Napoleon, an international committee was formed to organize plans for a tunnel between England and France.

In June, 1868, this committee and its engineers had an interview with the late French Emperor, in the course of which copies of the report and plans, together with an address in favour of the project, signed by many peers and members of Parliament and other representative men, were laid before his Majesty, who referred the matter to the Minister of Public Works, who in his turn appointed a special commission to inquire into the subject in all its bearings.

Mr. James Chalmers, in his work on the Channel railway, states that the deepest point at which a tunnel could be driven, the head of water would give a pressure of 110 lbs. to the square inch, and if at this point a pick or drill should penetrate a crevice connecting with the water above, the result might be the ruin of the entire undertaking. He states that an accident of this nature a few years ago in the Lake district not only flooded a valuable mine, but the jet of water passed through the body of the unfortunate miner as if it had been a rod of iron.

This irruption of the water was one of the grave inconveniences which had to be overcome by Sir I. Brunel and Mr. Page in the construction of the Thames Tunnel. All dangers from the possible irruption of the sea water may, we are informed in the official report, be avoided "by going deep enough below the bottom of the Channel." This is somewhat vague, and the construction of the work would be subject to this inconvenience, that any mistake as to the proper depth would be attended with very serious results; then, too, the limits of the depth must be regulated by the consideration that approaches at either end will be required for the railway traffic. It appears, however, that all that is requisite is to get into the grey chalk stratum. Now, the depth of the chalk on the English coast is 470 ft. below high water, and of this 175 ft. is the upper or white chalk, and 295 ft. the lower or grey chalk; while on the French side there are 270 ft. of white chalk, and 480 ft. of grey chalk—a total depth of 750 ft.

The proposed Channel Tunnel must descend to a very great depth to leave sufficient thickness between the arch of the tunnel and the bottom of the sea, ren-

dering long tunnelling on each shore necessary to ensure suitable gradients for reaching the level of the adjacent country, and cannot be accomplished in a shorter distance than thirty miles at the least; and if we take the Thames Tunnel as a criterion, and at the same cost per mile, the proposed Channel Tunnel would require more than fifty-four millions sterling of money to carry it out, with a possibility of failure at any moment; but in a work of such an uncertain nature, no estimates, however ample, could be relied on.

An increase of the difficulties will be experienced as the tunnel advances, and will be very great. There is the constant supply of fresh air and light required for the workmen, which must be kept up; the removal of the *débris* taken from the tunnel; the conveyance of materials to the point where the work is going on; and there will be the limited space in the tunnel to carry on the works, so that only a few men can work at the same time; the keeping down the water, if such be met with, and the risk of an inundation at any moment; and as the work progresses and extends farther from the shore, so much will the labour and risk become greater.

The method of connecting the railway system of England and France by submarine communication, which it is the object of the present paper to introduce, consists in having two distinct tubes of cast iron, which are to be laid on the bed of the Channel, side by side. The route selected is from Dover to Cape Grisnez, a distance of 20½ miles, between which points the deepest sounding is 30 fathoms, and the steepest gradient 1 in 100.

The whole length of the line is 21½ miles, and the estimated cost is about one million sterling per mile for two distinct tubes. The tubes will be 4 in. in thickness, and cast in lengths of 5 ft., which will be bolted together internally through flanges 12 in. deep, cast on the end of each length. The tube will be lined with brickwork, in cement, 12 in. thick, and over this will be laid a lining of ⅝-in. boiler-plate iron, which will render the interior surface flush and even throughout, so that either the locomotive or pneumatic system can be employed. The weight of the section of the tube will be somewhat in excess of the weight of the water it will displace, so that it will remain quiescent upon the bed of the Channel. Before lowering, the sections of the tube will be bolted together into lengths of 25 ft. on board a pontoon or floating workshop, from which they will be lowered into position; each end of the 25 ft. lengths being fitted with a movable watertight bulkhead. Assuming a length to have been lowered and fixed in position in connection with the shore works, a 25 ft. length will be lowered directly in advance of it by means of slings and chains. These slings will be bolted to the tube from the inside, and after the tube has been connected with the preceding length, the bolts are partially withdrawn and the slings hauled up. The bolts are then screwed up again, the ends being left to project beyond the outside of the tube. The slings on the seaward end of the length of the tube, assumed to have been laid, are provided with pulleys, under which are passed a set of hauling chains, the ends of which are attached to the slings on the shoreward end of the tube being lowered. As soon as the latter reaches the level of the tube which has been laid, it is drawn towards it by the hauling chains, which operate from the

pontoon. The projecting portion of the bulkhead on the fixed tube is for the purpose of guiding the last lowered length of tube up to the face of the work, the guide fitting into a sheath formed in the bulkhead of the unfixed tube. As soon as the tubes have been drawn close together, the screwing up is commenced, and is continued until the flanges meet, a packing of india-rubber being interposed to make a temporary watertight joint. The joint is afterwards caulked from the inside with iron cement, and is thus made permanently watertight. The flanges having been bolted together, the first bulkhead is removed, and the second bulkhead is then in view. The guide of the bulkhead is removed by unbolting from the outside, and thus a manhole is formed, by which the workmen can enter the length of tube just laid, and remove the body of the bulkhead by unbolting it from the interior. By this time another 25 ft. length will have been lowered in front of the last laid length, and the process of connecting it with the seaward work is carried out as just described. As each length of tube is laid, it will be fixed in position by six screw piles passing through stuffing boxes, three at each end of every 25 ft. length.

During the process of laying the tube, communication will be maintained with the shore and the advanced end of the tube by electricity, and the transport of the men and materials by means of rails, which will be laid down as the work proceeds. The workmen will also be placed in electrical communication with those on the pontoon above, which will enable them to give directions respecting the lowering of the next section of the tube, the exact position of which they can ascertain by means of three glass sight-holes fixed in the bulkhead. The floating pontoon will be 400 ft. long, 100 ft. wide, and will have an opening in the centre, 100 ft. long by 25 ft. wide, through which the lengths of the tube will be lowered.

It will be attended by steam launches and tenders for conveying materials, &c., to and from the shore, and for shifting the anchors, as the process of laying proceeds.

The ventilation will be effected by means of engines of 1,000-horse power, placed one at each end of the tubes. This power will be necessary for the proper ventilation of the tubes; but at the same time it may be utilized for the propulsion of the trains upon the pneumatic principle, if desired. The work of laying the tubes may be expected to occupy five years; but, if the seasons be moderate, it can be done in three.

Things New and Old.

Queen or Empress?

We hear of her Majesty's new title as having been discussed in the House of Commons. What strange whim is this? Surely there is no need for this alteration. To quote a very, very, very hackneyed saying, "What's in a name?" Surely the rose of England by any other name would smell as sweet; but, all the same, why alter its title—Queen? Queen is good, and sounds as English as King and Jack. Why change it, then? The excuse made is on account of India. Then Mr. Lowe said the colonies would not like it, and he worked round to prove that Empress meant only one who could rule the empire under the sword.

Apropos enough as regards India; but however well it might suit Germany, and however Germanic our Royal family may be by descent, there can be but one opinion about John Bull's feeling on the subject. It is even doubtful whether he could pronounce the word Empress, though we are having Spelling and Pronouncing Bees enough now to learn even anything. But Queen or King is so much more British, and seems so thoroughly homely, that if the matter be pushed to the extreme it is certain to be received with disfavour by the public. Of course, we have no objection to the word Empire, and therefore we may be called crotchety for kicking against Emperor and Empress; but we are not a classic kind of people, and, as a rule, never feel like Mrs. Blimber, who was burnt up with that intense desire to have known Cicero in his retreat at Tusculum. Imperator sounds Roman—Lord Shaftesbury might say Romish—and Empress will not fit to our English tongues. Like the men who fled to the ford in Israelitish days, our folks will never frame to say the shibboleth correctly; so let us, good-natured, prejudiced, conservative, old-fashioned people that we are, keep to our Queen. "Why, good heavens!" as Trollope's Archdeacon Grantley used to exclaim, "it is impossible!" Call her Majesty Empress? Why, that would mean upsetting the National Anthem. And if "God save the Queen" were sat upon, what would become of England—Europe—the World? It would never do. As a people, for goodness knows how many years, we have played and sung "God save the Queen," and to take it out of our mouths would be like robbing us of our musical bread. There would be a chance for Brinley Richards, or Arthur Sullivan, or Sir Julius Benedict, or Dr. Stainer to compose us a new anthem, with words by Dr. Carpenter, Sawyer, or the Poet Laureate. But who wants a new National Anthem, or who could ever give us a new one that we should like, bad as the old one is? No, it fits us exactly; so let us, making ourselves the spokesman of the British people, say or sing—

"Let's all our wrongs redress,
End all this awkward mess,
We want no new Em-press,
Let's have our Queen.

Confound these politics,
Frustrate these foolish tricks,
Firm on the old we fix—
God save our Queen."

BUFFALO ROBES.—The collection of buffalo robes on the plains, as well as on the mountains of the Far West, is stated to be smaller than last year. The deficiency amounts to about 40,000 robes, which is a very considerable item when we take into consideration the increased demand of this season, a natural consequence of our last severe winter. One firm has collected during the season over 40,000 robes, and has already disposed of a large portion of them. They have in their possession nearly the entire collection of the season, as outside of this number there have been but very few brought to this market. The cold weather of last winter has made the quality of the fur very good, and, in the absence of the usual quantity of wolf-skins, the prospects are that buffalo robes will find a very lively market at their present comparatively moderate prices.

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER XXIX.—AFTER DINNER.

SIR HAMPTON was right—the visitors had arrived; and almost directly after the ordinary greetings, during which Tiny never raised her eyes, and Fin was so short that Sir Hampton darted an angry glance at her, the dinner was announced. Trevor took in Lady Rea; Vanleigh, Tiny; Landells, Fin; and Pratt, Aunt Matty—Sir Hampton bringing up the rear.

The dinner was good, and passed off with no greater mishaps than a slight distribution of the saccharine juices in a dish in the second course down the back of Aunt Matilda's poplin—Edward being the offender; but the sweetly gracious smile with which the lady bore her affliction was charming, and Fin looked her astonishment at her sister.

But the dinner was not a pleasant one, even if good; there was too much, "Thompson, that hock to Sir Felix Landells;" "Thompson, the dry champagne to Captain Vanleigh"—it was hard work to Sir Hampton not to add "of the Guards;" "Thompson, let Mr. Trevor taste that Clos-Vougeot;" and it was a relief when the ladies rose.

"If he will talk about his cellar, Felix, punish it," whispered Vanleigh, as they drew closer; but Sir Felix Landells' thoughts were in the drawing-room, and though Sir Hampton persisted in talking about his cellar—how many dozens of this he had laid down, how many dozens of that; how he had been favoured by getting a few dozens of Sir Magnum O'Pus's port at the sale, and so on *ad infinitum*—Sir Felix refrained from looking upon the wine when it was red; and as soon as etiquette allowed they joined the ladies in the drawing-room, where Trevor had the mortification of seeing Vanleigh resume his position by Tiny, while Landells loomed over Fin like an aristocratic poplar over a rose-bush.

Trevor consoled himself, though, by sitting down by pleasant Lady Rea, while Sir Hampton cracked at Pratt, talked politics to him, and his ideas of Parliament, and Aunt Matty fanned herself, as she treated Pepine to the sensation of lavender poplin as a couch.

"What a nice little man your friend is, Mr. Trevor," began Lady Rea; "I declare he's the nicest, sensiblest man I ever met."

"I'm glad you like him, Lady Rea," said Trevor, earnestly; "but I want to talk to you."

"There isn't anything the matter, is there?" said Lady Rea, anxiously.

Trevor looked at her for an instant, and saw that in her face which quickened his resolve, already spurred into action by the markedly favoured attentions of Vanleigh to the elder daughter of the house.

"Lady Rea," he said, "I'm in trouble."

"I'm so sorry," she said, with simple, genuine condolence. "Can I help you?"

"Indeed you can," said Trevor; and he proceeded to tell her what he had discovered respecting Mrs. Lloyd's designs.

"Well, I never knew such impudence!" said Lady Rea, indignantly.

"You will sing now to oblige me," said Vanleigh;

but for the time, Tiny declined, and Fin was carried off to the piano by Sir Felix.

"Do you know 'Won't you tell me why, Robin?'" said Sir Felix, beaming down at the little maiden.

"Yes," said Fin, sharply.

"Then do sing it."

"I shall sing 'Maggie's Secret' instead," said Fin, sending the colour flushing into her sister's face, as she rattled it out, with tremendous *aplomb* given to the words—

"So I tell them they needn't come wooing to me."

Meanwhile, Trevor went on pouring his troubles into Lady Rea's attentive ears, as Sir Hampton prosed, Aunt Matty dozed with a smile on her countenance, Pepine snoozed in her lap in a satin tent made of his mistress's fan, and poor Tiny longed for the hour when she could be alone.

"Lady Rea," said Trevor at last, "I will not attempt to conceal my feelings—I think you can guess them, when I tell you that my trouble is that your daughter passed me in the wood talking to—questioning the little girl I have mentioned, and I read that in her face which seemed to say that she despised me."

"Then that's what's made Tiny so low-spirited for the last few days," said Lady Rea.

"God bless you for that!" said Trevor, in a low, hoarse voice, "you've made me very happy. Lady Rea, will you take my part? If I have no opportunity of explaining, will you do it for me? I am very blunt, I know—recollect I am a sailor; so forgive me if I tell you that since I first met Miss Rea, I have scarcely ceased to think about her."

"I'm not cross with you for it," said Lady Rea, "and I will tell Tiny; but you mustn't ask me to interfere—I couldn't think of doing so. There," she whispered, "go and talk to her yourself."

And she gave the young fellow so pleasant a look, as their eyes met, that he knew that if the matter depended upon her, Tiny Rea would be his wife.

But there was no opportunity as yet, for Tiny had been unwillingly led to the piano, vacated by Fin, Sir Felix being button-holed by Sir Hampton, and Pratt taking his place, and talking to the sharp-tongued little maid in a way that made her exclaim—

"How solemn you are!"

"Hush!" said Pratt. "Listen! What a sweet voice!"

"Yes, Tiny can sing nicely," replied Fin.

And they listened, as did Trevor, while, in a sweet, low voice, Tiny sang a pathetic old ballad, with such pathos that a strangely sweet sense of melancholy crept over Trevor, and he stood gazing at her till the last note had ceased to thrill his nerves, when Vanleigh led her to her seat, and crossed to pay his court to Aunt Matty, awakened by the song.

"Now," whispered Lady Rea, "go and tell her how it was."

And, in obedience to the indiscreet advice, Trevor crossed to where Tiny was seated, offered his arm, and together they strolled into the handsome conservatory.

"Miss Rea," said Trevor, plunging at once *in medias res*, as Tiny made one or two constrained replies to his remarks, "I have been explaining to Lady Rea what trouble I am in."

"Trouble, Mr. Trevor?" said Tiny, coldly.

"Yes: how I had ventured to hope that I had won

the friendship of two ladies, and with the vanity, or weakness, of a sailor, I trusted that that friendship would ripen into something warmer."

"Mr. Trevor," said Tiny, her voice trembling, "I must request—"

"Tiny, dear Tiny," said Trevor, passionately, "I may have but a few moments to speak to you. Don't misjudge me, I have explained all to Lady Rea, and she will tell you. If I am mad and vain in hoping, forgive me—I cannot help it, for I love you dearly; and this that I see—these attentions—these visits—madden me."

"Mr. Trevor, pray—pray don't say more!" exclaimed Tiny, glancing in the direction of the drawing-room.

"I must—I cannot help it," he whispered, passionately. "Tell me my love is without hope, and I will go back to sea and trouble you no more; but give me one little word, tell me if only that we are friends again, and that you will not misjudge me, or think of me as you did the other day in the wood. Tell me—confess this: you thought me inconstant?"

"I had no right to judge you, Mr. Trevor," said Tiny, in a trembling voice; "but—but my sister—and I—"

"Tiny," whispered Trevor, catching her hand in his, "my darling, I could not have a thought that you might not read. Give me one word—one look. Heaven bless you for this."

Young men are so thoughtless, so full of the blind habits of the sand-hiding ostrich at such times, and so wrapped up was Richard Trevor, sailor and natural unspoiled man, in the soft, gentle look directed at him from Tiny's timid, humid eyes, that, regardless of the fact that they were close to the drawing-room, the chances are that he might have gone farther than kissing the little blue-veined hand he held in his, had not, from behind a clump of camellias, a harsh voice suddenly exclaimed—

"Now, then, am I right?"

And Sir Hampton Rea and Aunt Matty appeared upon the scene.

Dear Aunt Matty had had her way, and was satisfied. Quiet as she was, she had her suspicions of Trevor's earnest talk to Lady Rea; and when Vanleigh drew her attention to the fact that the two imprudent young people had strolled off into the conservatory, by saying, "I suppose Miss Rea finds the room too close?" she gave him a significant look.

"Sit down and hold Pepine for me, Captain Vanleigh," she said, in a low voice, "and I'll soon put a stop to that."

Vanleigh said something very naughty, *sotto voce*, and then, as he felt bound to flatter Aunt Matty, he seated himself, and nursed the wretched little dog, while Aunt Matty made her way to Sir Hampton, who was deep in a political speech, to which Sir Felix kept saying "Ya-as" and "Ver' true," eyeing Fin the while through his glass.

Fin's sharp eyes detected something wrong, and she tried a flank movement.

"Go and tell my sister I want her directly, Mr. Pratt," she said—"in the conservatory."

It was too late; Aunt Matty's forced march had done it.

"Eh! what? Er-rum!" ejaculated Sir Hampton.

And he followed his sister out into the conservatory, where she made the before-mentioned remark, and Sir Hampton, turning port wine colour, caught his daughter by the wrist.

"Go to bed this instant!" he exclaimed, reverting in his rage to the punishment inflicted years before. "As to you, sir—"

"Excuse me, Sir Hampton," said Trevor, boldly.

"Let me speak," said Aunt Matty, with great dignity. "Hampton, this is neither the time nor the place to have words about the works of the wicked. I warned you, but you would not take heed. Valentina, you are not to go to bed, but to return to the drawing-room as if nothing had happened. Hampton, you must not disturb your other guests—the strangers sojourning in peace within your gates."

At a time like this Aunt Matty was too much for Sir Hampton. She had girded herself as she would have termed it; and when Aunt Matty girded herself her words were like a strong solution of tracts, and she became a sort of moral watering-pot, with which she sprinkled the wicked and quenched their anger. Sir Hampton never so much as said "Er-rum!" at a time like this, and, seeing the wisdom of her words, he picked two or three flowers, and walked back into the drawing-room with Tiny, the poor girl trying hard to conceal her agitation.

Trevor was about to follow, but Aunt Matty stopped him.

"Sit down there, young man," she said, severely.

"If you wish to speak to me, certainly," said Trevor, politely; "but what I have to say must be to Sir Hampton, with all respect to you."

"Sit down there for five minutes, young man, and then you can return."

Trevor fumed—the position was so ridiculous; but he accepted it, glancing the while at his watch, and then fighting hard to preserve his gravity before the stiff figure in whose presence he sat. For, in spite of the annoyance, a feeling of joyous hilarity had come upon the offender against decorum: he knew that Tiny loved him, and doubtless a few words of explanation would be listened to when Sir Hampton was cool, and then all would come right.

"I think the five minutes are up, Miss Rea," said Trevor, rising. "Perhaps you will take my arm, and we can stroll back as if nothing had happened. I will see Sir Hampton in the morning."

Aunt Matty bowed, and then, wearing the aspect of some jointless phenomenon, she stalked by his side back into the drawing-room, where, in spite of the efforts of Lady Rea and Vanleigh, nothing could disperse the gloom that had fallen; and the party broke up with the departure of the gentlemen, who walked home on account of the beauty of the night—Vanleigh talking incessantly, and Trevor quiet, but striving hard to conceal his triumph.

"I'll ease him as much as possible," Trevor had said to himself, *à propos* of Vanleigh.

"Poor brute! he little thinks how he's shelved," said Vanleigh to Landells.

"Little girl's positively b'witching," said Landells.

"Who, Miss Rea?"

"Jove! No—sister. Sharp and bright as lit' needle."

"Just suit you, there, Flick."

"Ya-as."

"It came to a climax, then, Dick, eh?" said Pratt.

"Franky, old boy, I'm the happiest dog under the sun."

These fragments of conversation took place at odd times that night; and the next morning, soon after breakfast, Trevor made an excuse to his friends, and started for Tolcarne.

"Gone to get his *congé*, Flick," said Vanleigh.

"Poor Trevor! Sorry. Not bad 'flier," said Sir Felix.

"Bah! every man for himself. But we shall have to clear out after this. We'll go and stay at St. Francis, and when the old boy finds we are there, he'll ask us up to Tolcarne."

"But seems so shabby to poor Trevor," said Sir Felix.

"Pooh, nonsense! Every man has his crosses in this way. Let's get out somewhere, though, so as not to be at hand when the poor beggar comes back; he'll be in a towering fury. I hope he won't make an ass of himself, and force a quarrel on me."

A Costly Stimulus.

THE feats of the American pedestrian who has lately been entertaining admiring crowds with an exhibition of what seems to a disinterested observer to be self-inflicted torture, have created some amount of gossip about the sustaining power of which he is supposed to have made considerable use. Surely we did not need the introduction or spread of a new narcotic amongst our population. There is, happily, a good understanding spreading among our better educated classes that these sleep-producers and so-called soothing medicines have highly injurious effects even when used only to a moderate extent; but still, there will always be those who, for the sake of the temporary support or alleviation of pain, will risk the deleterious effects of these poisonous sedatives.

The stimulant to which the performer at the Agricultural Hall has had recourse is said to be the leaf of the coca—a bush in some respects resembling our black-thorn, and growing in various parts of South America, where it has been much in favour with the natives from time immemorial. The Peruvian Indians seem to have been particularly addicted to its use, and to have found it supply them, in a high degree, with the fictitious strength induced by alcoholic liquors; though, like them, it has a most deadly effect on the health and energies of its consumers. It was thought such a luxury in Peru in the days of the Incas, before the spread of the Spanish dominion, that it was reserved exclusively for the higher orders; and it can have been no real boon to their inferiors when its use became general. The mode of preparation seems extremely simple; the leaves are merely dried in the sun, and mixed with a little lime when they are ready for chewing. With a supply of this *cuca*, which is the local form of the name, the Peruvian Indian is said to perform the most wearisome journeys almost without fatigue, and with the shortest possible supply of food. This immunity from physical distress for the time being must, however, be compensated for most fully by the after-effects, which,

we are told, resemble in a great degree those of opium-eating. This opinion we find endorsed by a writer in the *London and Provincial Illustrated Newspaper*, who says: "It is tolerably certain that very serious disorders of the digestive organs, and of the brain and nervous system, follow what might be regarded as a moderate use of it in the countries where it is consumed; and as we have already a host of dangers arising from chloral hydrate, laudanum, chloroform, and other opiates, to say nothing of alcoholic drinks and pungent liqueurs, disguised under various names, or hypocritically blended with enervating 'aërated' drinks, the use of which, we flatter ourselves, conduces to sobriety, we can well be spared another peril."

Sir John Lubbock on Ants.

AT a late meeting of the Linnæan Society, Sir John Lubbock made a further communication on his observations on ants. His paper was divided into three heads:—1. The power of intercommunication among ants as to information about locality of food, &c. 2. Their organs of sense. 3. Their affection or regard for one another. His arrangement for testing their power of communicating information as to route and locality was modified in some minor respects in different sets of observations, but the essential features of it were these:—He had a glass box for the "nest," so that he could watch what was being done inside. This was placed on a pole about as high as the level of his eyes. On the other side of the pole was a board intended as a promenade for the ants. Near to this were three pieces of glass, the size of microscopic slides, and these were connected with the board by strips of paper, which served as bridges. On one of the pieces of glass was placed a collection of food, and on the other two there was nothing. Two ants were taken and marked with spots of colour, as in former observations, so that they should be readily recognized. These were both taken, one after the other, to the store of food, and were guided and taught their way to the nest. They soon learnt their way to and from the nest to the food supply, coming out of the door along the outside to the pole, around that, across the board, along the paper bridge, and so to the glass that supported the food, and so back again to the nest. Sir John Lubbock's object was to watch whether the other ants in the nest would find out the food, and, if so, to test as far as possible whether they found it from information given, or whether they tracked the scent. He devoted certain periods, as he could spare the time, to watching the movements of the ants, counting the number of journeys made by his marked ants, and also recording how many untaught strangers, as he called them, made their way from the board along the right bridge to the food. At his first period of observation he found that, while his marked ants made forty journeys with food, nineteen strangers also came on to the bridges. Of these, two only turned to the food, eight turned to the wrong bridge, and the rest went straight on. Modifications in the arrangements of the bridges were made in different ways, while the rest of the construction was left unaltered. The observations made on different days and during periods of different duration all showed the same result. The marked

ants who had been taught their way pursued their work steadily and systematically, while of the strangers only a very small per centage reached the food, the remainder taking one of the bridges that led them wrong. The notion that ants have the power of making communications about routes and localities seems, therefore, to be fallacious. In referring to the organs of sense, Sir John had endeavoured to ascertain whether the antennæ are organs of hearing or of smell. He had tried them with all sorts of noises he could contrive, and found no results. If ants have hearing, they must be sensible to those vibrations of the air which do not affect the human ear. But he had also tried the antennæ with smells, and he found that if he put a fine camel's hair pencil with a scent on it near one of them it shrank away, and then if applied to the other that also turned away. The use of the antennæ, however, needs further investigation, and Sir John hopes soon to make further observations. As regards their affection for one another, he does not doubt that an ant that dies laden with food will be cared for by its companions; but he brought forward a number of instances in which he had put ants that had suffered immersion in water for periods of from an hour to ten hours in the way of ants that were passing by, and he found almost invariably that they took no notice of their unfortunate brethren. Indeed, the exceptions in which any attention was paid were so few, that Sir John said he was disposed to regard these ants as having individual feelings, which were by no means those common to the community.

Eight Hours by the Seaside.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

IT was not right of Bellweather. Emphatically, it was not right for him to deceive Matilda Maria Poddy, to whom he was so devotedly attached. Let us admit, however, that the temptation was great. The Saturday was bright and glorious, filling with a sort of subdued splendour even the little back room behind the shop in Endell-street—the shop in which Bellweather vended the hats and caps—and there on the wall, right in front of the shop, was the great bill with the words—"Eight Hours by the Seaside for Half-a-crown."

Visions of brightness, freshness, and renewed health were conjured up in his ardent mind, and he said—

"To-morrow I will go!"

And to-morrow he went.

But why without Matilda Maria? And how did he find it in his conscience to inform that discreet sempstress that he was going to dine with his uncle at Camberwell, and to drink of the old port with the blue seal, so that she must not look for the pleasure of his company? The truth is, the gentle hatter had a taste for science, in which his Matilda Maria did not participate; and in addition to the visions of brightness, freshness, and renewed health, he was bent on doing a little in the way of replenishing his marine aquarium, if only to the extent of securing a few anemones, which objects Matilda Maria was apt injuriously to designate as "dabs o' jelly."

So you see it was purely want of sympathy between them which induced Narcissus—that was his Christian

name—to trifle with Matilda Maria over that trip to the seaside, upon which he had set his mind. And she took it very quietly—more quietly, in fact, than he could have wished. It would have been more gratifying to his self-love had she even gone the length of wishing his Camberwell uncle at Jericho; but she didn't. She simply said—

"Well, Cissy, don't take too much of the blue port with the old seal," and left him to go his ways.

He had gone his ways on the Sunday morning as far as the Victoria Station, when a mysterious person in a fur cap, and with a patch over one eye, beckoned him aside.

"Half price," he said, showing him a railway ticket. "I've taken it for myself and can't go, and they won't give me my money back."

Narcissus bought the ticket. He bought it first and looked at it afterwards, for it was a furtive proceeding altogether: when he looked at it he found that it was one of last Sunday's tickets! And the man had disappeared.

There was but one thing to be done.

"The fellow has sold me," he said, promptly. "I must sell somebody else."

And on this virtuous resolution he acted. On the arrival of the train at Brighton he politely handed the tickets to the collector, and in doing so adroitly passed off the old ticket as that of a little man in a prismatic comforter, who, by reason of his confusion and an impediment in his speech, tried in vain to effect an explanation, and was promptly handed over to the police for an attempt to defraud the company, while Bellweather contrived to escape.

Though he got clear off, however, his conscience smote him. He felt like a criminal, and was haunted by the direst terrors of detection. Eager as he had been to make the man in the prismatic comforter his victim, no sooner was this accomplished than he would have given anything if he had not done it. He slunk along down towards the sea like a criminal sneaking from justice; and his terror may be imagined when, as he went, a hand was suddenly laid on his shoulder, and a gruff voice shouted—

"Hallo!"

He turned.

The face which met his own was that of a friend—his friend Bigsby, accompanied by his intended, the fascinating Patty Goggen.

"Glad to see you, Bellweather!" cried Bigsby, stopping. "You're just a friend in need."

"Indeed."

"No, in need."

"Oh, yes, of course. I say 'Indeed!' when you say 'In need.' In need, indeed—indeed in need, you know? But what's up?"

"Why," replied Bigsby, all excitement, "you know Coodle?"

"No."

"Not our friend Coodle? Always wears a comforter—like a rainbow—summer and winter—"

Narcissus reeled.

"Wh—wha—what of him?" he gasped.

"Why, he came down with us this morning; obliged to ride in another carriage for want of room; was victimized by some scoundrel; and locked up for riding with an old ticket, and trying to defraud the company."

"Bless me! How atrocious! And you're going to see after him? Well, good-bye for the present."

"Stop a minute," cried Bigsby; "I can't go running Patty off her feet. Will you take charge of her while I look after Coodle?"

"Well, I wanted to go down to the beach while the tide was out," Narcissus began.

"The very thing," cried Patty. "I shall be charmed with the sea when the tide is out. Let us go by the pier."

"Yes," said Bigsby, "and wait till I bring Coodle."

"Bring Coodle?" gasped Narcissus.

"Yes."

"Rainbow comforter and all?"

"Yes. You don't object?"

"Object! Shall be delighted."

But he didn't look it. Nor did his face brighten until he made the discovery that Patty Goggen knew nothing whatever of the place, whereupon he turned his back on the pier and led her in a precisely opposite direction, chuckling within himself as he reflected on the adroitness with which he would escape the prismatic Coodle.

As an additional precaution, Narcissus resolved within himself that he would take a boat, which would also enable him to do a little fishing. But the sea was so bright and so calm, that it inspired everybody with a boating ardour; so when they had gone a long way, and still found there was no boat to be had, the two sat down together on the beach, with the fishing tackle at their feet, and patiently waited for what might happen. Now Patty Goggen was a pretty girl and a lively, doing great credit to Bigsby's taste, and it was the most natural thing in the world that Narcissus should mentally compare her with his Matilda Maria, and so should begin to mention that young lady, and to enlarge on her taste for novels and indifference to science. Patty in return fell into discourse of Bigsby and of her love for him, and then she stopped and heaved a deep sigh, and drew out her handkerchief. These symptoms of distress so affected the tender hatter that he ventured to inquire if she were unhappy, to which she responded that she was and that she wasn't, and that, in fact, if the truth must be told, the cause of these mingled emotions was a recent discovery of—a secret!

"A secret?" cried Narcissus.

"Yes; but dare I confide in you?"

"You dare."

He pressed his hand upon his heart, and one knee sank deep into the shingle.

"You dare!" he repeated.

"Well, then," she returned, "the other evening as we parted he put a letter into my hand."

"A letter?"

"Yes. A letter he had written—"

"Well?"

"To another!"

"Monster!"

No, it was not Narcissus who cried "Monster!" The word was uttered in a very different voice—in a voice shrill, piercing, and indignant. The startled pair sprang to their feet, and, to his horror, Narcissus found himself confronting the rigid form of his Matilda Maria.

Imagine the scene. Try to imagine that which followed; but it is impossible. Bellweather's dismay, Maria Matilda's fury, Patty's indignation—all mingled

in deafening confusion. It was in vain that Narcissus tried protest or explanation. The facts against him were too black. Brighton was not Camberwell; Patty was not the old port with a blue seal; they were alone together; letters were passing between them—all, all was too conclusive, too convincing. For awhile he entreated a patient hearing; but at last, utterly overcome, listened in mute agony to the epithets and reproaches heaped on his devoted head.

Once only he made a faint show of resistance.

The words "Marine aquarium" escaped his lips.

"Marine fiddlestick!" cried Matilda Maria.

"It is true," he urged, eagerly. "I came down in hopes of *actinia mesembryanthemums* or *vermigrade echinodermata*."

"Indeed! and where are the *crysanthemums* and the *tomatas*? And what were you to catch them with?"

"With my fishing—"

He did not complete the sentence. Basket, net, everything with which he had come provided had disappeared—washed out to sea. It was the last straw. With a piteous groan he threw himself on the beach, and listened mutely as his Paddy worked herself up into one final burst of eloquence, and casting him off for ever, strode from the spot.

Tender-hearted little Patty, hurt less on her own account than that of Narcissus, followed in the vain hope that matters might be explained, and there the wretched man lay, reproaching himself for his treachery, and bemoaning his miserable fate. It was rather pleasant than not to thrust his face into wet shingle and moan; but he was quickly startled from this luxury. The tide was creeping in, and the dash of a great wave brought him to his feet, like a drenched spaniel. As he scrambled up, an object caught his eye. It was the letter Patty Goggen had handed to him at the fatal moment.

His first impulse was to tear it to pieces. Then he stopped, looked at it intently, and burst into an exclamation.

"Paddy!" he cried, looking hard at the writing.

"It is 'Paddy.' And what is this—'My dear Matilda Maria.' Matilda Maria Paddy! And here sentiments of affection—vows of love—Cupid's dart—bleeding heart—cure the smart—never part! And signed—'Your own Tony Bigsby!' What! Bigsby, my friend—Patty's friend! O, Matilda Maria, this is your constancy! This is why you were so willing that I should dine off my blue uncle at the Camberwell seal! But I will be revenged. Bigsby dies!"

Most opportunely for Bigsby, he at that moment hove in sight. And he was alone. Narcissus noted that. He particularly noted that. The prismatic Coodle was not there, and this relieved his apprehensions; while since Bigsby was a smaller man than himself, there was no impediment in the path of vengeance. So he repeated—

"Bigsby dies!"

Bigsby on his part was not a little indignant at having had to pace the whole length of the beach in search of his intended, and strode forward, fiercely demanding what he was doing there, and what had become of Patty.

"Ha! ha!" was the defiant response.

"I ask you—" cried Bigsby.

"The letter!" was the fierce retort.

"The letter! What letter?"

"The letter!"

"Are you mad?" demanded Bigsby, not unnaturally.

"That's right. First injured, then insulted! Choose your weapons, miscreant. You have a stick; here is a broken oar. Choose!"

"Thank you. I am not in want of exercise this hot day—"

It was too late. Narcissus had seized the broken oar, and was wildly whirling it about his head. Bigsby was compelled to put himself on the defensive. He had no science; but then, neither had his opponent, and so he was able to ward off his blows for a time. But both were growing warm, when they were interrupted by piercing screams. The next instant Matilda Maria and Patty had rushed upon the scene, and were compelling them to desist from the murderous encounter. Perhaps neither was very sorry for the interruption; but the less they felt annoyed the more they showed it, and fumed and blustered and protested that nothing should satisfy them but blood—a luxury which, however, they permitted themselves to be persuaded could just as well be indulged in on a future occasion.

In the midst of it all, the ladies received a reinforcement.

It presented itself in the guise of a rainbow comforter, under cover of the flapping ends of which the unfortunate Coodle made towards them.

At sight of this prismatic vision, Narcissus would have flown, but a stern voice detained him.

"Stop him!" cried Coodle. "That is the ruffian."

Bigsby's hand was instantly at his throat.

"Abandoned criminal!" he cried, "I seize you in the name of an outraged Coodle."

It was Matilda Maria who interposed.

"No, no!" she cried, "this cannot be true."

"Tis he!" exclaimed Coodle—"tis the miscreant who has defrauded me. Justice must have its course."

"No, you will spare him," Matilda Maria entreated; "he has deceived me, but he could not have wronged a Coodle. There must be some mistake. Why do you not plead for him, woman?"

It is hard for a woman to be called "woman," and Patty Goggen resented the outrage. She turned aside.

"What, will you stand by and see him dragged to a prison?" demanded her rival, who had not read novels to no purpose.

"I scorn your imputations," replied Patty; "but do not fear, Tony, you will spare him for *my* sake."

Tony obeyed.

As to Coodle, Matilda Maria had thrown her arms about his comforter, and wept upon his shoulder. He bore it even as if he liked it; in a word, he was vanquished.

"And now," said Patty, addressing the victorious Poddy, "I have said a word for him, let me say a word for you also. I told you your jealousy was unfounded."

"You did; but—"

"Stay; I can explain all."

"You know what brought Narcissus to Brighton, then?"

"That," said Narcissus, "I will explain. I simply made my uncle with the blue seal an unworthy excuse for taking a cheap solitary excursion in the interests of my marine aquarium. But you—you also are here?"

"Yes," replied Matilda Maria; "tempted by the

beauty of the day, and thinking you were enjoying yourself over your Camberwell blue uncle with the port seal, I thought I might venture to avail myself of the excursion to get a whiff of sea air with the 'Ban-dog's Bargain.'"

"With whom?"

"My new novel, that's all. But this lady—how came I to find you in her society?"

"That," said Bigsby, "I can explain. It was at my request that he took charge of her, while I went to get our friend Coodle here out of a little difficulty—"

"About which we will say no more," interposed Coodle, graciously, with a glance at the fair Poddy.

"But the letter I saw pass between them?"

"Ha!—the letter!" cried Narcissus, suddenly aroused to the memory of his wrongs. "Look at it, sir—addressed 'Miss Poddy,' and signed 'Tony.' What have you to say to *that*?"

"The explanation," replied Tony, "is very simple. You are evidently not aware that the time was when I was Matilda Maria's accepted suitor? What we thought was love, quietly subsided into friendship. The engagement was broken off, and the letters on both sides returned. One of these returned letters I last night gave to Patty in mistake for one I had written to her, and this appears to have been the cause of some unnecessary pain and unpleasantness."

The explanations thus tendered were regarded as satisfactory all round, and the day which had begun so darkly, ended as all holidays should end. Bellweather's fishing tackle was recovered and presented to Coodle as some balm for his wrongs, his railway fare being of course refunded. The homeward journey was delightful, and from that night dated certain little arrangements in accordance with which a double wedding shortly took place, at which Coodle assisted as best man all round, appearing for the first and last time without his comforter. In the absence of that garment, he, at the wedding breakfast, proposed the bridesmaids, and very nearly proposed to one of them—but thought better of it, and has ever since found happiness enough in sharing his prismatic leisure between the two friends who shared with him in the adventures of that eight hours by the seaside.

THE MOABITE STONE.—A cast of M. Clermont-Ganneau's restoration of this monument has been presented by the directors of the Louvre to the committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund. The long delay of seven years in putting together the fragments which remain must be laid partly to the account of M. Ganneau's official occupations in Constantinople, and partly to his recent work of research in Palestine. The stone, as now reconstructed, is 4 ft. 1 in. long by 2 ft. 2 in. broad, having a raised border of two inches running round. The upper end is circular, the lower square. About two-thirds of the inscription are preserved in the fragments. There are twenty-one of these, two are of considerable size, the rest are quite small. The remainder of the inscription is made up from M. Ganneau's squeeze of the whole, and from six consecutive lines copied for him by the Arab who took the squeeze. The cast will remain a short time at the office of the fund, 9, Pall-mall East, and will then be removed to the society's room at the South Kensington Museum. It is to be photographed immediately.



Sketches of the Central Wilds.

BY A WALKING WALLABY.

VIII.—SERPENTS IN EDEN.

"THEY'RE done for now, sir," said Joe, "so you needn't be cross about it. They won't come no more, sir. If ever one of that tribe goes near that hut again, I'm a Dutchman. I've been five and twenty years now in the country, and if I haven't picked up money I've got hold of something, and that's a bit of knowledge about the blacks. We're safe enough now close home, sir; but it will be, look sharp when you're out, for they'll look out for us, and we shall have it warm when we're away."

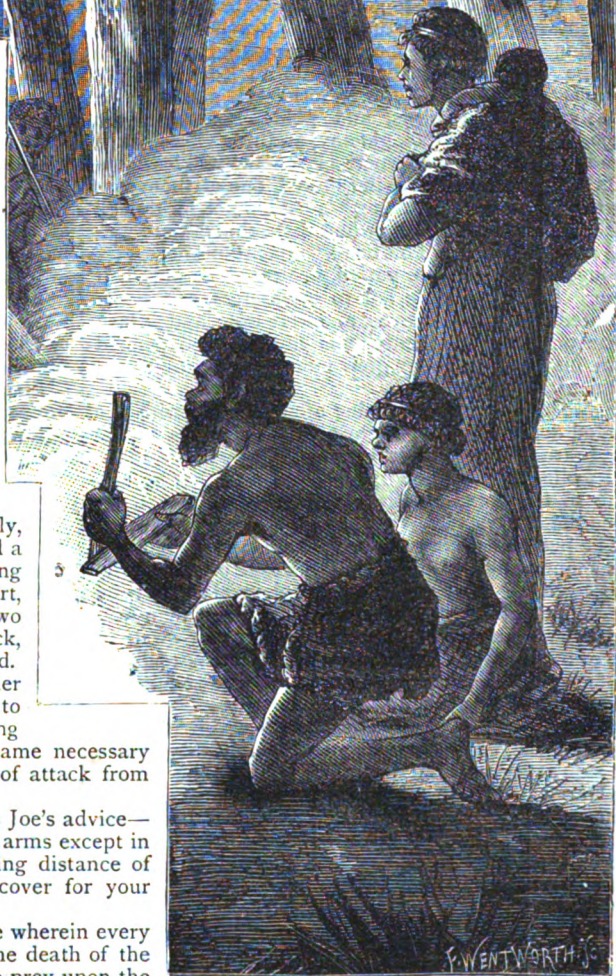
The old shepherd was right, for though, during the next few weeks, no signs were detected of any one having been near the hut, six bullocks were speared, and as many missing, one of which afterwards came back, lowing piteously, with a spear sticking in its ribs. Joe, too, had a very narrow escape, the spear hurled at him having passed through the sleeve of his woollen shirt, grazing and tearing his arm. After that, upon two separate occasions, Joe's rifle was heard to crack, but he refrained from telling at what he had fired.

But Jerry was less modest: he performed another triumphant war dance in honour of having put to flight a couple of black fellows who were hunting the sheep in charge of the lads, and it now became necessary once more to be constantly on guard for fear of attack from their cunning enemies.

"Shoot 'em, I say, whenever you see 'em," was Joe's advice—advice tempered by Harry into "Never use your arms except in self-defence, and never stay within spear-throwing distance of any bush or bit of scrub that would act as cover for your enemies."

And now began a harassing, weary life, a time wherein every man led a life of dread. The recollection of the death of the two men who had accompanied them seemed to prey upon the spirits of all. They saw enemies in every bush or clump of grass, and more than once poor Jerry nearly came to an untimely end by suddenly displaying his black visage and spear above some patch of vegetation.

In nineteen cases out of twenty the dread of the men was without immediate foundation, though these false



alarms caused quite a panic, but the twentieth instance would probably be a very narrow escape from death.

On one occasion Harry came suddenly upon a little group of natives, where the man of the party was busy with a couple of sticks, by whose means, after the fashion of the country, he had contrived by friction to set fire to a few leaves. In this instance, however, there was no danger to fear, for no sooner did they catch sight of Clayton, than the black, his gin, and children set up a wild shriek of horror, and darted into the bush.

It was Joe's fortune to have more than one encounter with natives of a more aggressive disposition, and, as has been said, twice over his rifle was heard to crack, though he was chary of speaking of his adventures on account of his master; but it was a case of first fire, and Joe's bullet took effect just in time to silence his treacherous enemy.

Now no man dared to go to draw water, while even Jerry always started forth upon a two hours' reconnoitering expedition before venturing to the river to "kedge fis," and from being quite an Eden, with its glorious verdure and flower-sprinkled glades, gorgeously feathered birds, and golden sunshine, the place began now to look gloomy, and was viewed with jaundiced eyes by its owner. Even the reckless convicts grew unsettled, and murmured, one of them saying that the place was getting "most too hot, for though he didn't mind a spear now and then, things were getting now too bad to suit his book." Operations necessary amongst the stock were put off, neglected, or only half done. The sheep were left to themselves, and badly pastured; the cattle strayed, and were lost; and at last, as he pondered frequently upon how much depended upon his success, Harry grew morose and embittered against his persecutors.

However, he got up morning after morning with the dogged determination of fighting his difficulties to the last, bearing his load until he should utterly break down, and feeling that to give up his land now that he had gone so far would be disheartening to a degree, let alone the loss.

The hut now became a very haven of refuge, for it was shunned by the blacks as the abode of evil spirits who lived in barrels and devoured meal; the tribe one and all coming to the belief that every man who had been slain by Harry and his party now dwelt in one or other of the tubs in the big store-room, ready to spring out and devour the unfortunate who should approach.

So whatever dangers awaited the men abroad, there was this amelioration of their condition that they always felt safe at home. But this made matters the harder, for Harry now found it difficult to get his men away to their work; and but for his own ready hand, and the good example he set of never flinching from going to the places where he wished his men to work, there would have been but little done.

As it was, though, he felt at times sorely tempted to move back upon some one of the more settled portions, till he looked around at what had been done, when, stubbornly brave, he would determine to fight on at all risks.

"For her sake," he said. "While if I fall—" he continued; and then, instead of finishing his sentence, he would turn very sentimental, after the fashion to be

expected in one who conjured up dangers, and pictured the face of one, looking pale and tear-stained as she busied herself making mourning to wear for his sake—Harry never thinking for the moment of the possibility of a young lady whom he had wooed ever choosing another mate.

So far everything, saving the troubles with the blacks, had gone on in the most satisfactory manner. The garden had flourished to an extent that produced a feeling of regret at the prospect of ever leaving; the sheep had multiplied exceedingly; and, in spite of losses by strays—those speared or driven off by the blacks—the cattle had increased to a wonderful extent. Then, too, the weather had been all that could be desired—never too hot, so as to turn the country into a dry desert; never enough rain to do more than refresh the earth, well replenish the river and the creek at the other extremity of his run.

And a busy life they led at Gurra Gully, with always something on the way. Now they would be at work branding the half wild cattle, battling with the frightened, bellowing beasts held by a long hide rope looped over their horns, twining it round the post and dragging at it till they stood as if ready for the poleaxe, with head down and sides heaving—sides flaked with sweat and slaver from the excitement of the struggle. Then would come the bellowings and ravings, the lashings of the tail, and blind, unreasoning plunges to get away, as the red-hot iron was applied to the poor brute's haunches, when, indelibly marked with its owner's initials, it was set free.

Then, too, there was the busy time when all hands were at work, sheep washing; soaking and cleansing the fleeces of the timid sheep, ready for the next operation—that of denuding them of their woolly treasures.

Fleeces and fleeces piled up after having been pressed and turned into bales; casks upon casks of tallow; hides in abundance; and, had Harry known it, a fortune waiting for him in the hills in the shape of malachite—copper in one of its most beautiful forms.

As he gazed around, how could Harry Clayton help rejoicing in his wealth, and thinking of the end that he had calculated upon? And at such times he would snap his fingers at the dangers past, declaring it a sin and a shame for a man to go through life making a bugbear of the inevitable.

"There," exclaimed Harry, "danger and risk, or no danger and risk, one must die some time; we were born to do so, and therefore all we have to do is to meet it like men."

But, then, though they were making good wages, Harry's men were not prospering to the same extent, and could not view matters in the same light as their master;—Joe, the old shepherd, for instance, whose opinion was that the more a man had of life the more he wanted, and the less disposed he felt to part with it.

"You see, sir," he said to Harry, "that's all very well, and what some people call flosophy; but we poor fellows can't help looking at matters in a different light. Death's sure to come to all of us, same as it has to our fathers, and same as it will to our children; and it seems better to me for us all to wait till he does come, but all the same getting out of his way as much as we can, and not be doing as we are here, walking out half-way to meet him. I aint making a bugbear, as you

call it, sir; but it certainly seems to me that a man will live longer in a big town where there's law and order, and police, and rates, and taxes, than he will in a place like this, out here in the wilderness, where every black fellow you meet seems to have been born with but one idea, and that is, as a white man—not as I'm very white now, goodness knows—which was perfectly true, for the small portion of Joe's face not covered with grisly brown beard was baked of a dull brick red by the sun and long exposure to the atmosphere—"as a white man, sir, is a something made by natur on purpose for a pramblatin cockshy and a perypitettic target—they being the very words I once heard a parson on his circuit apply to himself—cockshy and target, sir, for him to knock down with his whirligig boom-rang thing, or fill chock full of spears. It seems to me, you know, sir, that one's life's given to us to take care of as long as we can, to fight for and support, and stick to and keep out of danger, and run away with to a safe place if needs be; and then when you can't do any more, and must give it up—that is, when you've fought in every way to the last pinch, and there's no help for it—why then, what you've got to do is to give it up like a man, and go quietly to your long sleep. Mind you, sir, I don't say as I'm right, but one likes to advance one's own opinions, and if you prove me to be wrong, sir, why I'll knock under like a man should."

"I think you are about right, Joe," said Harry, gloomily, as he paused for a moment in the task that had that evening fallen to his share—that of bathing a severe cut in the old shepherd's leg.

"Don't think—as I have said to you scores of times before, sir—don't think as I want to run away from you," continued Joe; "because I don't. You've been a good master to me, and I'll stand by you till you say 'Be off, I don't want you no more;' but all the same it strikes me—a little tighter, sir—now another stitch in there—don't be afraid, I won't flinch—does smart, though, awful—strikes me, sir, that if instead of being out to-day with your sheep I'd been walking down Sydney streets in the dust and glare, no black chap would have shied his boomerang at me so as most to cut one of my legs off—it don't fit with your flosophy, sir, about dying some time or other, and it does with mine about keeping out of death's way. And 'pon my word, sir, hard even at sixty, one has the child left in one still; for what did I do to-day, instead of lifting my rifle and knocking the Satan-skinned dog over, but set to and kick at the cursed throw-stick, because it had hurt me, when, of course, I only just had time to jump back to save having one of the long spears skewered through me. If you still think it best to stop here, sir, I won't leave you, depend upon that; but what I say is, don't be extravagant with your stuff; for if men aint capital they're labour, sir, and capital and labour always goes together. But I'm sore to-night, sir, and this wound hurts. I'll take care none of the others leaves you; but if the worst does come to the worst, now or at any other time, bury me decent, sir, and read the service, or I sha'n't rest."

Harry Clayton must have been a stronger man than he was for such conversations not to have their effect upon him. He felt to a certain degree answerable for the lives of his men, and it needed all his courage at times to keep up in spite of the encouragement of his

prosperity; but, although a naturally amiable disposition, the constant aggressions had the effect of souring him, especially as he came to know more thoroughly the cowardly, cruel nature of his assailants. So far as his experience went, it seemed that there was very little of the untutored savage, with his noble traits, but a brutal, gluttonous, licentious, animal nature, that seemed as if it would require generations of civilization to make it decent.

Of course there were exceptions, and from some of the tribes good and valuable servants were to be obtained, who, like Jerry, from their knowledge of the country and ability to track, became most useful; but it was as native policemen, engaged in marking down and fighting against native tribes, that they best displayed their usefulness, such a life giving them an opportunity for pursuing their natural avocations and indulging their inherent love of destruction.

As to the tribes uniting for self-defence, that seemed quite out of the question; for, as a rule, tribes only encountered for the purpose of exchanging spears and batterings of waddies—meetings from which painted nude wretches would crawl with a spear thrust in some vital part, and a crimson dye staining their dusky bodies.

So, from constant trouble and aggression, Harry began to find the general hatred of the settlers for the blacks taking strong hold upon him, and making him raise his rifle whenever a black figure came in sight.

But now came a new enemy. For weeks past it had been hot—hotter than at any time during his stay in the country. At first this was hardly noticed, although Joe gave more than one of his ominous shakes of the head as he looked up at the clear sky and the gleaming ball of fire that seemed to scorch them. Then the heat suddenly grew excessive—"The heavens were as brass, the earth as iron." By degrees the green robe of earth turned brown—brown, and then into a dry, harsh drab, whose withered grass would crumble into a fine powder in the hands already white and harsh with the sand borne from a distance upon the hot breeze. Then upon this hot blast, as from the mouth of a furnace, came a dense black smoke, the vapour arising from a thousand fires where settlers had set light to the parched grass to clear it for the new crop which should spring up after the next rainfall.

Hot—hot—hot! a heat which seemed unbearable; while through the gloomy vapour the sun poured down his scorching rays, so that it seemed impossible to pass out of shelter—where even the sheltered one seemed ready to succumb. The silence at this time was oppressive almost as the heat. The only moving things seemed to be the birds; though, for the most part, they followed the example of the sheep and cattle, and sought such shelter as they could find beneath the thinly-foliaged trees. Cattle, too, collected by the creeks and rain pools, now for the most part turned into craters of dense, sticky, reeking mud, over which floated clouds of flies—a very torment to the thirsty cattle. As for the woolly-coated sheep, wherever there was a bit of shade to be met with, they clustered thickly together, open-mouthed and restless, panting heavily, and turning their mild, expressionless eyes towards their keeper.

Moving about was almost impossible, and to add to

Harry's troubles the faithful Jerry, who seemed rather to approve of the heat, suddenly announced—

"Damn black fellers 'gain."

But this time the sight of the rifles, brought to bear directly, put their enemies to flight, and Harry returned panting to his task of thinking over the state of affairs.

In another week he could see that there would hardly be a blade of grass for the cattle; bullocks were already dying, and the sheep suffering woefully. The supply of water was getting less and less, and terribly impure, while the river, instead of flowing bright and sparkling, was turned into a chain of sedgy, muddy pools, trampled into a thick paste by the cattle, and dead fish lay drying into modern fossils, encased in a matrix of hard alluvial deposit. Then, too, in their eagerness to quench their furious thirst, the horses had trampled two of their fellows to death—wretched beasts that had sunk in deeply, and been beaten down and suffocated in the reeking slime.

However disposed in mind to be active, and to render every possible aid to the stock, it soon became almost physically impossible, while the longed-for rain seemed as far off as ever from coming.

From First to Last; or, Gwendoleen's Engagement.

CHAPTER II.

I WENT up by the 10.50 train from Midborough, which reaches London at ten minutes past twelve. My carriage was empty when I got in; but just before the train started a lady entered in great haste, shut the door quickly, and pulled up the window. The next moment we were off, and I could not help fancying, as we steamed out of the station, that she uttered a sigh of relief. My fellow-traveller was tall and slight, and dressed in deep mourning. She wore such a thick crape veil that it was quite impossible to see her face, but I decided in my own mind that she was lovely. Her hair was very fair—straw-coloured, with threads of gold here and there, and she had a long, slender, swan-like throat. I hate travelling companions, even when they are young and lovely, and I at once buried myself in my *Saturday Review*; but after a few minutes she interrupted me by asking if the train stopped often before reaching London.

"Only once," I replied—"at S——, to take the tickets."

"And that is close to London, is it not?"

"About ten minutes' distance."

"Thank you," she said.

And then we relapsed into silence, and I returned to my *Saturday Review*; but I caught my attention continually wandering to my travelling companion, and I kept on wondering who she could be. I had a strange presentiment (I suppose we have all felt them at some time or another, about some one) that I should one day know her better. Just before we reached S—— station, she drew off her glove to unfasten her *porte monnaie*, and I observed her hand attentively (I am a great observer of hands, and a believer in chiromancy); it was firm, white, and well shaped, but not the sort of hand I had pictured to myself as belonging to her. I had fancied she would have a slender, transparent hand, with long, tapering fingers, and delicate, filbert-

shaped nails—ornamental rather than useful adjuncts to her person. But no, her hands were a trifle large, and round rather than tapering; they looked like hands capable of a good deal of work. She wore no rings, save two on the third finger of her left hand: one, a large mosaic Italian ring of curious device; the other, one of those slender gold circlets, with a coral hand attached, that are sold in Italy as a talisman against the evil eye. I took in all this at a glance. We never spoke again till we were close to London, when I inquired if I could be of any use in seeing after her luggage.

"Oh, no, I thank you," she replied. "I can manage very well."

When we got out of the train I entirely lost sight of my travelling companion. I had my own luggage to find, and then I hailed a Hansom, and told the man to drive as quickly as possible to No. —, Gray's Inn-square. I had been so interested in my fair companion during the journey, that my thoughts had been diverted from Harford and his letter; but now I began to wonder once more what the upshot of all this was to be. I hoped Florance meditated doing nothing rash.

From noisy Holborn into grave, silent Gray's Inn-square, it is only a minute's drive—through the narrow archway and across South-square—and yet it is like entering another world. It is hard to believe that you are within a stone's-throw of one of the quietest spots in London when you are being jostled along the busy thoroughfare; and yet it is so. As I drove into Gray's Inn-square, I wondered whether Miss Gwendoleen would feel chilled and terrified by the aspect of those tall, grimy-looking legal mansions; for I concluded that the expected "somebody" referred to her.

I alighted at No. —, the house Harford had indicated in his note, paid the cab, and walked leisurely upstairs, examining the name on each door I passed as I did so. On the third floor were two sets of chambers; upon the door of one was painted the name of Mr. Horace Elstob, solicitor; upon the other I read Mr. Florance Harford.

I rang the bell; it was answered by a gipsy-looking boy, who was, I supposed, the Paul my friend had spoken of.

"Are you Mr. Fairfax?" he asked, in a strong foreign accent, and making a desperate effort to pronounce my name properly.

I answered in the affirmative, and he showed me through a small inner room into a large, lofty apartment that Harford had converted into a studio. I shivered as I entered—it looked so cold with its bare walls and lofty ceiling. Fortunately a bright fire was burning in the grate.

"If the signor does not require anything, I am going out," said the boy. "I was to leave the key with the signor, and I will return at nine o'clock. Signor Harford, I was to say, will be here at five."

He departed, leaving me to my own meditations; and I began to wonder what would happen next. Here was I shut up in these chambers, waiting for I knew not whom, and expected to remain there until it should suit Harford's convenience to return; and I began to hope devoutly that the "somebody" would not arrive until he did. I made up the fire, threw myself into an arm-chair, and took up a volume of Rossetti's poems to beguile the time. But it was no use; I could not read.

The distant hum of busy life seemed to murmur a refrain in my ear that prevented my understanding one word that was before me. I am not usually given to nervous fancies, and I felt quite ashamed of myself. Finding it useless to attempt to read, I lit a cigar, and paced up and down the room. Just as the clocks in the neighbourhood began striking two, I heard a cab dash rapidly round the corner, drive up the square, and stop at the door. I strained my eyes, but I was too high up to see who got out. After a minute or two the cab drove slowly away. Then I heard a light foot-step ascending the staircase. Nearer and nearer it came till it stopped before the door of Harford's chambers. Then there was a ring at the bell—not a timid ring, but a loud peal, as if "somebody" was determined to be heard and answered.

I went to the door at once, turned the handle, and opened it, standing back as I did so; and "somebody" rushed in past me: somebody in a dark serge dress, brown velvet bonnet, and thick Shetland veil. She turned round quickly, and, upon perceiving me, exclaimed—

"I thought Mr. Harford—"

I started. Surely I had heard that voice before.

"Mr. Harford does live here," I interrupted her, "but he has been obliged to go out of town for a few hours, and has deputed me to receive you and remain with you until his return."

All this time she was fumbling at her veil; she could not unfasten the knot.

"Can I help you?" I asked.

"No, thank you; I shall manage it directly," she replied, pulling off her glove, when I at once recognized my travelling companion.

And she had been passing the last half-hour—whilst I had been fuming and fidgeting—in changing her mourning attire, evidently only assumed for purposes of disguise.

She was very lovely—lovelier even than I had pictured her to myself. A pure oval face; thin, high, perfectly chiselled features; masses of silky, straw-coloured hair; and large, light blue eyes, with very large, dark pupils, and long black lashes—these made up the category of her charms, "the good gifts that crowned her queen." It was certainly the most beautiful face I had ever seen—not only in form and colouring, but expression. The whole countenance was stamped with a strongly-marked individuality that fascinated me even more than its marvellous perfection of outline. The eyebrows, which were very dark and straight, almost met across the face, imparting to it an air of sternness that contrasted strangely with its otherwise peculiar softness and delicacy.

I showed her into the studio, gave her a seat by the fire, expressed a hope that she did not find the room very cold, and then stood still opposite her, at a total loss to know what to say next. Here was I, receiving and entertaining an expectant bride—for so I supposed her to be—not having the slightest idea of where the expectant bridegroom was, nor why he delayed his coming.

She seemed annoyed—and very justly, I thought—at Florance not being there to receive her. I could offer no explanation of his absence. I told her what I knew—that he had written to say he was obliged to go out of town on important business for a few hours,

and had begged me to remain at his rooms until he returned.

"And you must have come up to town for that purpose," she said.

"I did. I only received his letter this morning," I replied.

"He should have let *me* know," she said, "that he could not be here until five."

And then she dismissed the subject, and began talking about something else.

Some of Harford's Italian sketches were lying about, and we began examining them. They appeared to me, in my ignorance, to be very good.

"He will be a great artist some day," I said.

"Never!" she replied, emphatically. "He will never be *great* at anything; he has not sufficient strength of purpose."

I opened my eyes rather wide.

I was quite of this opinion, but I was surprised at her expressing it.

"Does he not paint well?" I asked. "These sketches appear to me—I certainly know nothing about painting—to be very pretty."

"He paints tolerably well, and some of his sketches are very pretty; but that is not being a great artist. You are a barrister, Mr. Fairfax. Well, doubtless you know many a man in your profession who does his work very well, who will never be a great judge nor an eminent lawyer."

I bowed my head in assent.

"But, you see, I know nothing about art," I said.

"I am a practical man; my profession makes a man matter-of-fact."

"And I respect you for it," she exclaimed, eagerly.

"I hate dreamy, unpractical men."

"Good heavens!" thought I; "then she either does not care about him, or love must have blinded her completely to Harford's real character; for if ever there lived a dreamy, unpractical being it is he."

"And if I had a brother," she went on, "I would far rather he became a lawyer than an artist, unless he were a really great artist, whose works would live after him, and exercise a high and ennobling influence on his fellow-creatures. If he could not be *that*, I would sooner he followed any other calling than art. I can't bear to see a man wasting his life in painting pretty pictures. I detest anything like vagueness, or weakness of purpose."

"You'll find a good deal to detest, then," I thought, "in your future husband."

And I pitied them both; for I felt that if she had any illusions respecting Florance, a terrible day of awakening must come. Harford was not a man with whom a clever, sensible woman could live long without discovering his many faults and shortcomings; and his were just the kind of faults, too, that a woman holds in contempt in a man—particularly when that man happens to be her husband.

"Then you do not admire Harford's paintings," I said, after a short pause.

"To a certain extent I do," she replied; "but there is such an incompleteness about everything he does; and he is satisfied with so little. He has never really mastered the rudiments of his art; he paints far better than he draws. The truth is, Mr. Fairfax, Florance has neither patience nor perseverance to do anything

very well. I wish he had. I have such a respect for thoroughness and steadiness of purpose.

'He is crowned with all achieving,
Who first perceives and then performs.'

Don't you agree with Goethe?"

"Entirely," I replied, thinking more of the fair speaker than of the words she was quoting.

I hoped Harford would settle in England when he married, and that I should see a good deal of him and his wife. I knew few really nice women well. I had no time for cultivating female friendships, and but little inclination as a rule; but this girl had inspired me with a peculiar interest from the first moment I saw her, and I felt a great curiosity about her future. Would she be happy with Florance? I doubted it.

CHAPTER III.

THE moments slipped by, and still she and I sat on there—one on either side of the old-fashioned fireplace—watching the dull light of a November afternoon gradually fade away into darkness. We talked of many things: of foreign countries that she had visited and I had not (I had travelled very little); then we discussed books, and politics, and things in general, sometimes agreeing, but more often differing. She was a capital conversationalist, and the dialogue never flagged. Occasionally her rather Utopian theories would make me smile; and then, again, her enthusiasm almost infected me. Her opinions were very decided; but there was an earnestness and purity about every word she uttered that did not fail to win your admiration, even when you could not quite agree with her. I had never talked so much to a young lady before; and I had always thought that women—particularly unmarried women—were not worth talking to. But here was evidently the exception that proved the rule. The more I conversed with my companion, the deeper insight I gained into her character, the more I marvelled at the step she had taken. I could not understand her consenting to any thing clandestine—certainly not to a clandestine marriage; and with a man, too, with whom she did not appear to be passionately in love—the excuse one generally makes for women on these occasions. There must be a *dessous des cartes* of which I was ignorant, of that I felt certain. She never once referred to her approaching marriage; she said very little about Florance, and that little was not satisfactory. She spoke of him with a half pitying, half contemptuous fondness, and every now and then a chance reference to him would call up a blush—more of shame than of love, I fancied.

Five o'clock struck, and still Harford tarried.

"It is time Florance put in an appearance," I said at length. "It is past the hour named in his letter."

Such a look came over her face for the moment—a look that I devoutly hoped I should never see my bride elect's face wear. But she recovered herself, and replied, gently—

"Florance is never punctual—or rather, he never calculates. Probably it was not possible for him to be here by five. I dare say he will come soon; but in the meantime I am famished, and I am sure you must be the same."

I confessed I was rather hungry; and I went to the cupboard in the next room, where I found some *brioches* and chocolate, which we cooked over the studio fire.

I do not think I had ever enjoyed a meal so much before. My companion told me she was celebrated for her culinary powers, and certainly her chocolate was excellent.

Suddenly it occurred to me that I did not know her name, and I asked her what it was.

"Gwendoleen Ramsay," she replied. "I am astonished you did not know it."

"I have only heard of you as Gwendoleen," I said.

I fancied she looked rather cross when I said this, which I considered absurd; for it could not be supposed that Florance would have spoken of his *fiancé* to his greatest friend as Miss Ramsay. We became quite confidential over the chocolate. I, usually so reserved and shy in ladies' society, found myself talking to Gwendoleen Ramsay as if I had known her all my life; and her remarks proved to me that she was not the mere frivolous trifler I had hitherto supposed all women to be. She had travelled and read much; and, what is far better, she had thought over all she had read and seen. She asked me many questions about myself and my profession—not impertinently, but with an evident desire for information.

"What prompted you to become a barrister, Mr. Fairfax?" she said, presently.

"Well, you see, it was necessary that I should enter some profession where I could earn a livelihood, for my father is very poor; and I saw a better chance of getting on at the bar than in any other way, so I studied for that."

"But isn't it fearfully expensive going to Oxford? Florance told me it was ruinous."

"My style of living was rather different to Harford's. My University education did not cost my father much; for I gained a very good scholarship at Rugby, and I almost defrayed my other expenses by writing for magazines and newspapers."

"Did you?" she exclaimed, opening her lovely blue eyes very widely. "How proud your parents must have felt of you."

"Not at all! Why should they? I was simply doing my duty, and nothing more, in trying to put them to as little expense as possible. The son of a poor clergyman has no right to attempt to vie with the sons of peers and millionaires."

She was silent for a minute or two; then she said, suddenly—

"I wish Florance did not like living in Italy so much; but he declares that it is the only place where a poor man can really enjoy life: that you must be rich to do so in England."

"When you are married to him, you must disabuse him of that idea. Happiness depends more upon inner than outer conditions."

By this time the whole place was still. Not a sound was to be heard. The lawyer's clerks had all gone home, and the barristers who lived in chambers were off to their West-end clubs to dine and spend the evening. Suddenly we heard the sound of footsteps approaching.

"Florance!" I exclaimed.

A LADY put her watch under her pillow, but couldn't keep it there because it disturbed her sleep; and there all the time was her bed-ticking right underneath her, and she never thought of that at all.

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER XXX.—SPEAKING TO PAPA.

MEANWHILE Trevor was on his way to Tolcarne, where he was shown into the library. He felt flushed and excited, but he had come with the confidence of a conqueror; and, besides, he could feel that he was no ineligible *parti* for the young lady.

"Poor Franky, I know he's bitten by that little fairy," he said, as he waited impatiently—the "directly" of Edward, who had announced that Sir Hampton was in the garden and would come, having extended to ten minutes.

"Hang the formality of these things!" said Trevor. "I could talk to that dear little woman, Lady Rea, by the hour without feeling uncomfortable; but as to *pater*—well, there; it's only once in a man's life. Here he is."

The door leading into a farther passage opened this moment, and Trevor rose; but instead of encountering fierce Sir Hampton, in skimmed *petite* Fin, to run up to him flushed and excited, but with her eyes sparkling with pleasure.

She placed both her little hands in his, and her words came in hurried jerks, as she exclaimed—

"Tiny told me all about it—last night— Oh, I'm so glad!"

"That's right, little fairy," laughed Trevor, smiling down on the pleasant little face.

"But there's been such a rumpus, and I came to tell you before *papa* came."

"Indeed," said Trevor, retaining the little hands, though there was no effort made to remove them.

"Yes, *pa*'s been raging and bullying poor Tiny so. Those friends of yours came and proposed for us, and *papa* said they might come, and he is horribly cross about it. But you won't give way?"

"Do I look as if I would?" said Trevor.

"No; and I am glad, because I think you do like Tiny."

"Like?"

"Well, love her, then. *Ma* likes you too."

"And little Fin?"

"There's little Fin's answer," said the girl, with tears in her eyes, and she held up her face and kissed him with quiet gravity. "Oh, let me go," she cried, and she struggled from his arms and fled, leaving him to turn round and face Sir Hampton and Aunt Matty, who had entered by the other door.

"What does this mean, sir?" exclaimed Sir Hampton, furiously. "Er-rum! I am astounded!"

"Merely, Sir Hampton, that your daughter was willing to accord to me the licence that she would to a brother."

Aunt Matty was heard to mutter something about vulgar assurance, and Trevor flushed as Sir Hampton motioned him to a chair, took one, and crossed his legs; but he was determined not to be angry, and he went on—

"Our meetings, so far, Sir Hampton, have been unfortunate, and I have come over this morning to try and set myself at one with you. I presume I am to speak before Miss Rea?"

"My sister is in my confidence, and is my adviser,"

said Sir Hampton, in the tone he had prepared for the magisterial bench.

"Then, Sir Hampton, speaking as a frank, blunt sailor, I humbly ask your pardon for any lapses of politeness wherein I have been guilty, and also beg of you to forgive me for my conduct last night."

"A perfect outrage—barbarous," said Aunt Matty.

"Er-rum!—Matilda, let the young man speak," said Sir Hampton, magisterially.

"It was, I am aware, very foolish of me, but I was carried away by my feelings. Sir Hampton Rea, I love your daughter, Valentina."

"Absurd!" exclaimed Miss Matilda, who remained standing.

"I ventured to tell her so last night, in explaining away a little misapprehension that had existed between us."

"I never heard such assurance!" said Miss Matilda.

"Matty—er-rum! Matilda, I mean, have the goodness not to interrupt the *pris*—I mean—er-rum—the statement that is being made."

"If I could feel warrant for such a proceeding," continued Trevor, calmly, "I intended to speak to you this morning, and ask your consent, even as I spoke to Lady Rea last night, before I addressed your daughter."

"Just like Fanny—encouraging it!" muttered Aunt Matty.

"Go on, sir, I am listening," said Sir Hampton, telling himself this was quite a preparation for the bench.

"I came, then, Sir Hampton, to formally propose for your daughter's hand. Though comparatively a stranger to you, I am well known here—of one of the most eminent county families—and I have eight thousand a year. That, Sir Hampton, is putting the matter in a plain, businesslike form. If I am wanting in the proper etiquette, my excuse is my seafaring life."

"Exactly," said Aunt Matty, satirically.

The words "prisoner at the bar" were on Sir Hampton's lips, but he did not utter them; he only rolled his words nice and round, and infused as much dignity as was possible into his tones. "The young man" had insulted him, but he could afford to treat him with dignified composure.

"Mr. Trevor," he began, "I have listened to your remarks with patience"—magisterial here, very—"I have, er-rum! heard your application. For your friends' sake, I was willing to condone"—capital magisterial word, and he liked it so much that he said it again—"er-rum! to condone that which was past. Er-rum! but under the circumstances, near neighbours as we are, I think it better that all communication"—the clearest magisterial tone here, and repeated—"er-rum! communication between us should cease."

"Decidedly!" put in Aunt Matty, arranging her mittens.

"Er-rum—hear me out, sir"—a magisterial wave of the hand here, and a quiet settling down into the chair, as of one about to pass sentence—"Er-rum—as to your formal matrimonial proposals, they are quite out of the question. Captain Vanleigh has honoured me by proposing for my daughter Valentina's hand, and he is accepted."

"By the young lady?" exclaimed Trevor.

"Er-rum! there is no occasion for us to enter upon that point, Mr. Trevor, for—tut! tut! what do you want here, Lady Rea?—this is business."

"Fanny!" exclaimed Miss Matilda, as her sister-in-law entered the room, walked up to Trevor, shook hands very warmly, and then accepted the chair he vacated on her behalf.

"Thank you, Mr. Trevor. - Matty, I think any of my husband's affairs that are business for you, are business for me," said Lady Rea, firmly; "and as I know why Mr. Trevor has visited us this morning, I came down."

Aunt Matty looked yellow with anger, and for a few moments Sir Hampton's magisterial dignity was so upset that he could only ejaculate "Er-rum" three times at a few seconds' interval. It was awful, this manifestation of firmness on his wife's part, and he could only glare fiercely.

"What have you been saying to Mr. Trevor?" said Lady Rea, earnestly.

"Sir Hampton informs me that the young lady is irrevocably engaged to Captain Vanleigh," said Trevor, quietly. "May I appeal to Miss Rea?"

"My daughters will leave us to discriminate as to—er-rum—what is good for them," said Sir Hampton, stiffly. "Mr. Trevor, we must bring this very unpleasant interview to an end. Sir—er-rum!—you have heard my—er-rum—ultimatum!"

Aunt Matty bowed, and smiled a wintry smile, that was as cold as her steely eyes.

Trevor directed a piteous look at Lady Rea, and, without a moment's hesitation, she exclaimed—

"It's all stuff and nonsense, Hampy! I won't stand by and see either of my darlings made miserable!"

"Frances!" exclaimed Aunt Matty.

"Er—rum!" exclaimed Sir Hampton, and he sent at his wife a withering look.

"You can say what you like," cried the little lady, ruffling up like a very bantam hen in defence of her chicks; and now, for the first time, Trevor saw a trace of Fin. "I say I won't stand by and see my darlings made miserable. Tiny told me not ten minutes ago, crying up in her own room as if her heart would break, that she would sooner die than listen to Captain Vandells."

"Vanleigh!" said Aunt Matilda, contemptuously.

"Vandells, or Vanleigh, or Vandauk, I don't care a button what his Dutch name is!" said Lady Rea, angrily; "and I say it sha'n't go on!"

"Hampton!" began Aunt Matty, "do you intend—"

"Didn't I tell you not to interfere, Matilda?" exclaimed Sir Hampton, pettishly.

Aunt Matty darted an indignant glance at him, gathered up her skirts, and sailed out of the room, Sir Hampton wiping his perspiring brow.

"I thank you for your kindness, Lady Rea," said Trevor. "I will go now; perhaps another time Sir Hampton will accord me an interview."

"No; don't you go, my dear boy," said Lady Rea, earnestly, and she took his hand. "I give way in nearly everything, but I'm not going to give way in this."

"Fanny, this is foolishness!" said Sir Hampton, who looked as if in a state of collapse.

"It's such foolishness as this that makes people happy," said Lady Rea; "and if Mr. Trevor loves my darling, as I know she loves him, no one shall stand in their way."

"But, Fanny," said Sir Hampton, "I—"

"Look here, Hampy, you used to be very fond of me. Now, how would you have liked my father to make me marry some one else?"

"May I come in?" said a little voice; and Fin peeped in, entered, and closed the door. "I saw Aunt Matty go, so I came. Oh, pa, dear, Tiny is in such trouble—how could you?"

She seated herself on his knee, nestled up to him, and the knight began to stroke her hair.

"There now," said Fin, "I knew pa would be a dear kind old dad, as soon as he knew about Tiny. There now, I may fetch her down."

"No, no, Finetta, certainly not, I—"

Fin was gone.

"There, Hampy," said Lady Rea, going up to him, "you do love your children."

"I don't like it—I—I protest against it!" exclaimed Sir Hampton, struggling against the bands his woman folk had wreathed around him.

"Sir Hampton," said Trevor, holding out his hand, "say you relent."

"And—er-rum!—how the deuce—devil am I to face those gentlemen?" exclaimed Sir Hampton.

"I'll see them," said Lady Rea, firmly. "Here's Tiny."

In effect that young lady entered, red-eyed, wet-cheeked, and blushing, to throw herself on her father's breast, and cling there sobbing violently, while Fin took the precaution to lock the door.

"I don't like it, Tiny, I—er-rum!—I—I—"

"Oh, dear papa, I could not marry him," sobbed Tiny—and her emotion was so excessive that Sir Hampton grew frightened, and soothed and petted her till her sobs grew less violent, when Trevor approached and took her hand, and unresistingly drew her to him, till she hid her face in his breast.

Then there was a fine scene. Poor Lady Rea ran up to them, kissed Tiny, and tried to kiss Trevor, but could not reach, till he bent lower. After which she broke into a violent fit of sobbing, and plumped herself down in the nearest chair, Fin tending her for a moment, and then fetching Sir Hampton to her side, to ask forgiveness.

Next there was a general display of pocket handkerchiefs. Fin gave a hysterical hurrah, and kissed everybody in turn, ending by exclaiming, as she sobbed aloud—

"And now we're all happy!"

In fact there were smiles upon every face but Sir Hampton's, and he, feebly saying he did not like it, was left alone, as the party adjourned to the drawing-room.

"Lady Rea, I have you to thank for this," said Trevor, affectionately. "How am I ever to show it?"

"By being very, very, very kind to my darling there," said Lady Rea, pitifully; "for you're a bad, cruel man to come and win away her love."

Then, of course, there was a great deal more kissing, ending in a burst of merriment; for Fin dashed, wet-eyed, to the piano, and rattled off, "Haste to the Wedding," running into Mendelssohn's "Wedding March," till Tiny went and closed the instrument.

At that moment Edward, the footman, knocked at the door, and entered, saying to Lady Rea—

"If you please, m'lady, Miss Matilda's took bad, and wants the doctor. Who shall I send?"

"Gracious, Edward! what is it?" said Lady Rea.

"Please, m'lady, they think it's spasms," said the footman.

And Lady Rea ran out—the doctor was sent for from St. Kitt's; but, by the time he arrived, Aunt Matty's spasms were better.

And so Richard Trevor, master of Penreife, became engaged to Valentina Rea, of Tolcarne.

The Man in the Open Air.

IT is sometimes a matter of lament to see a child compelled to set a good example to its parents; and it is equally so when young nations, instead of individuals, start first in the race of precept. We have had our Small Birds Act, and the promise of a close time for seals, and a foreshadowing of protectory legislation for fresh-water fish. It is questionable, however, whether the birds are much better off, from what we are compelled to witness in our rambles; indeed, we are convinced it will take more than one generation to eradicate the ingrained youthful desire to go bird-nesting, particularly when the reward of the game is the blowing and sucking the spoil, in despite of a foul yolk or chicken-hazard, and while the eggs of every description of English and foreign bird are saleable for supplying the cabinets of collectors. We, but a day or two since, met a man and two lads in the woods of Hazelmere, Surrey, who, early as the season is, had a basket of the eggs of various birds taken from nests, at this season of the year so easily discernible from the absence of foliage on the trees. They made no secret of their pursuit, and said that for some of the eggs they got as much as fourpence each, while others were scarcely saleable at six a penny. We were informed that the safety of the eggs depended a good deal on the make of the basket, and that which was to be preferred was one of the Welsh kind, which has the shape of the half-shell of a monster walnut. This is lined with wadding, and as the eggs are obtained, layer after layer of this soft material is introduced, until the basket is full, when the whole might be subjected to comparatively harsh treatment without any danger of breakage; whereas in any other-fashioned basket the slightest jolt would create confusion and the destruction of its contents. The collector further informed us that he considered it a good day if, with the help of his two sons, he made up from two to three hundred eggs—he had sometimes had five hundred; that some of the birds continued to lay after being deprived of all their eggs, while others would desert their nest if an egg were not left. Of course, he knew the tempers of each, and acted accordingly.

Now, this man and his two assistants merely represent one small district in Surrey, of a few miles in circuit; and from what we learned, the practice is common throughout the county. Indeed, at a worthy miller's, in whose old-fashioned kitchen we have often enjoyed a crusty home-made loaf and cheese, with a hearty draught of home-brewed ale, we noticed that the beams of the ceiling and part of the bacon rack had been, since our last visit, festooned with small birds' eggs, threaded on cotton, the spoil of his boys. Upon our venturing timidly to approach the cruelty of the practice, we were good-humouredly met by the dame, who observed, "Bless them!—it keeps them out of mischief;" after which argument, of course, we were dumb, for as

Walcott hath it, "Who would argue with a miller's wife?" Why a miller's wife in particular? Has she learned more of the use of her mother-tongue from the clack of her husband's mill?

But we have been lap-winged away from our theme. We had intended to say that young America had shown a fitting example to old England in this particular desire to arrest the hand of extermination, and that there is every hope and guarantee that the movement of the "National Sportsman's Association" in that country will be a permanent institution, for the simple reason that it is inaugurated and will be supported by sportsmen. These gentlemen tell us, though in somewhat different words, that when the primitive emigrants first arrived in America they found the forests, seas, and streams swarming with animal life, the result of centuries of undisturbed security. From that day the destruction of all that moved in the earth began, first for the preservation of life and raiment, next as articles of sale and commerce, or for use in the arts of civilized life; again, as the population increased, the destruction kept pace with the people for purposes of sport.

This unrestricted slaughter has at length resulted in the total extermination in America of some varieties of animals and birds, or in driving them so far away from populated districts that isolated specimens are now only rarely found in the remotest wildernesses. The beaver, which was once so freely met with in Pennsylvania, no longer exists. The deer, which were once so plentiful in various sections of the country, are becoming rare; and various other animals, birds, and fish, are now the subjects of legislative enactments. So great is the importance attached to the preservation of fish, that many States have not only restricted the time of fishing, but have passed laws, and have made appropriations, and appointed commissions of eminent citizens for the purpose of re-stocking streams and lakes which the cupidity of man has almost depopulated.

While in the general sense it is to the interest of society that this indiscriminate slaughter be stopped, on no one class of men does the duty of guiding public sentiment, instigating harmonious international laws, and attention to a proper regard for the same, devolve so much as on the sportsman. The amateur who delights in hunting and fishing—not for gain, but for healthful recreation, for recuperation, for exercise—is, of all men, the one who appreciates the importance of the laws. The statesman who sees the advantage of cheap food and raiment for the people, whose interests are his charge, will use his influence to provide laws that future generations may not be deprived of the blessings which the present one is so wantonly destroying. In this view, the preservation of the fur seal in Alaska, the bison on the plains, the fish in our rivers and streams, and the crustacea on the sea coasts, is a matter of momentous importance. With the view, therefore, of procuring a concentration of interest and effort, it was deemed desirable to form a national organization, that the actions of sportsmen might be harmonious and uniform in all districts of America.

Here, then, it will be seen that they have in America legislative enactments to protect animals, birds, and fish, as we have, with the exception of the latter, in this country; and yet the want is felt of combination to carry out such laws; and we find the sportsmen of the States equal to the occasion. Is not this, then, the child

teaching the parent? And shall we, while blushing at the homily here read to us, hesitate to follow in footsteps which point so decidedly to the support of the laws, and render them no longer a dead letter? Such a combination of sportsmen would at once untie the Gordian knot of that supposed enigma, the preservation of fresh-water fish, and, while making this description of food plentiful for the many, produce the most effectual barrier against the spread and increase of the fraternity of prowling, marauding poachers.

G. F.

Ismail Pacha.

THE more one studies Egyptian affairs, the more one is impressed with the personal character of the Government. It could not well be otherwise. Perhaps it is not even desirable that it should be otherwise. The only choice for Egypt under her present condition lies between the tyranny of a number of petty pachas, as in the days before the destruction of the Mamelukes, and the rule of a single autocrat; and between these two alternatives there is no question as to the eligibility of the latter. Be this as it may, whether for good or bad, Egypt is, and will be, ruled by a despotic sovereign, and in consequence the personal disposition and peculiarities of the individual ruler possess a significance which does not belong to them under a European monarchy, however autocratic in its character.

This would be true even if the reigning prince were a man disposed to let things alone. Even then little or nothing could be done without his initiative. But it is still more true when, as is the case with the present Khedive, the ruler is a man of inexhaustible and restless energy.

Every undertaking in Egypt, from the contracting of a loan to the issue of an invitation to a Court concert, from the construction of a railroad to the appointment of a constable, comes under the direct immediate supervision of the Khedive. It is this fact which makes it so difficult to obtain any trustworthy intelligence about the progress of any negotiations with which the Egyptian Government is concerned. After all is said and done, the ultimate decision rests solely and entirely upon the will or good pleasure of the Khedive; all that his most intimate and confidential counsellors can do is to form a more or less correct estimate as to what resolution his Highness is likely ultimately to adopt; and as Ismail Pacha is a man singularly versed in the practice of concealing his thoughts, the men who know him best are liable to be deceived as to his intentions. After all, if a ruler knows how to keep his own counsel, and has almost absolute power of making up his own mind, and acting upon it when made up, all calculations as to what he may elect to do are mere guess-work. On the other hand, when once a thing is done, the fact that the Khedive is practically his own minister and administrator secures anything being known.

It is not in Egypt as in constitutional or oligarchic countries; there the sovereign is surrounded by a dominant class who become the first recipients of State secrets, and through whom this knowledge filters down to the outer world; here, as soon as the sovereign has declared his will, it is known to everybody; but till he has declared it his purpose is known to nobody. More-

over, the personal supremacy of the Khedive, which would equally exist even if he were the most indifferent and indolent of princes, is augmented by his superabundance of energy, and his intellectual superiority.

With the single exception possibly of Nubar Pacha, there is not one amidst the public men of Egypt who knows as much about the internal and external state of the country, and who has studied the conditions of the Egyptian problem as profoundly, as the Khedive.

It is impossible to converse with him on the affairs of Egypt without seeing that he understands the subject-matter of which he speaks more thoroughly than any of the ministers. The truth is that, in the ordinary sense of the word, the Khedive's ministers are not ministers at all, but departmental clerks, the most important part of whose work is done personally by the head of the office.

Whatever his other defects may be, indolence is not one of Ismail Pacha's failings. He receives visits from the princes every morning at an early hour. The audiences begin at nine and go on till long after noon. Then, with short intervals of repose for breakfast and dinner, the Khedive works till late in the evening; and midnight is well-nigh at hand before his ministers can feel any certainty of not being called for at any moment to consult with his Highness on some point connected with their department.

Critics say that the public service would be better discharged if the Khedive were content to allow greater supervision of details to his subordinates. But, as a matter of fact, he sees everything, knows everything, and orders everything for himself. This routine of labour goes on all day, and every day. The Khedive hardly ever takes a holiday except on occasions when he is obliged, much against his will, to appear in State in public. He constantly passes days and weeks without leaving the Palace of Abdin in the centre of new Cairo, where he dwells by preference; and even in the summer, when everybody who can get away goes to the seaside, it is with difficulty he can be induced to quit the capital.

Nothing is less like one's preconceived idea of the gorgeous magnificence of splendour supposed to surround an Oriental potentate than the spectacle of Ismail Pacha in his own palace. It is said that the harem apartments of Abdin are furnished with lavish outlay. As for the portion where the Khedive spends his day and receives his visitors, it has no pretensions to splendour of decoration, still less to any architectural beauty. In fact, Abdin, in as far as the public are admitted, is a barrack-like building, with a long suite of bare, empty rooms, whose only adornment is a profusion of Persian carpets, and a good deal of French gilding. There is a sentry at the door, and half a dozen chamberlains are in waiting in the antechambers to escort visitors to the Khedive; but otherwise there is no state or pomp of any kind. And, to say the truth, if you have any sort of pretext for wishing to see the Viceroy, or even if you have no pretext at all, you can get an audience of him with far less difficulty than you could procure an interview with the head of a public department in England.

His Highness is now in his forty-sixth year, but looks older owing to his great stoutness of figure. Leading, as he does, a very sedentary life, he has a good deal of the air of a man employed constantly on

desk work. Certainly, if the princes, dignitaries, and high officials of the Egyptian Court were gathered together at Abdin, the last person whom a stranger would pick out as the type of an Oriental prince is the short, stout, quiet gentleman dressed in plain black, without ornament of any kind, who now reigns over Egypt.

Like most of the higher class of Turks, Ismail Pacha has nothing of the Oriental about him in complexion, feature, or manner; and if you were asked to guess his nationality, I think you would say he was a Frenchman from the North of France, with perhaps a dash of Provençal blood. He was educated in Paris; and except that his manner, though singularly pleasant, is somewhat more stately than that of an ordinary Frenchman, you might take him at the first glance for a *bourgeois de Paris*. The recent death of his favourite daughter, as well as the cares of State, have told upon his Highness, and he has the worn look of a man whose energies are overtaxed. But the eye is still clear and bright, and the mouth and heavy jaw are those of a strong and determined character.

Nothing can be apparently more frank and outspoken than the Khedive's language; and nobody can talk with him for any length of time without coming to the conclusion that he is a man of remarkable vigour of mind.

Sketches of the Central Wilds.

BY A WALKING WALLABY.

IX.—QUENCHING THIRST.

WORSE and worse—worse and worse, day by day. The trees drooping, and the leaves brown and crackling into dust. The very animals grew tame, and more than once some great red mother kangaroo came loping up with her little Joey in her pouch, as if in search of moisture at the hands of man.

Now it was some favourite horse, now some promising heifer that succumbed, till Harry saw his cattle, as it were, melting away, and the carrion crows and wild dogs fattening upon the horrible banquet spread for them every here and there. At first, he shot the unclean visitors; but he soon found that it was not merely a complete waste of powder, but an injury to himself, entailing hard toil in various parts of the run to bury the unfortunate brutes that had perished. And now, from horses and cattle, Harry had to look to his sheep, which, from fine, fat, well-fleeced flocks, were fast turning to ragged, drooping bags of bones; and many were the consultations held with Joe upon the subject—consultations, however, which resolved all into one thing—that nought could be done whilst nature fought against them.

How the young man fretted and fumed to see his wealth taking to itself wings hour by hour, so that his return to England was being put off indefinitely.

"I thought I was getting on too well, Joe," he said, gloomily. "It all seemed too good to last; and now I suppose that I shall be ruined."

"Not this time, sir," said the shepherd, sourly; for his leg had festered, and he was in great pain. "You've got lots to go through yet. Wait till the drought's gone, and you'll have the scab in the sheep; get rid of that, and every blessed sheep you've got left, and you'll have a flood or two, a-purpose to bring you to your

senses. Oh, my poor leg! 'Taint quite a Garden of Eden, sir," he said, maliciously, as he recalled to mind his master's favourite comparison.

"A Garden of Eden, with the devil just beginning to show himself," muttered Harry, as he went out of the hut, and began to long for wind, in the hope that should it come it would bring rain.

Sure enough the wind came, but it brought no rain, only a hotter blast, laden with sharp, cutting dust, to add to the sufferings of man and beast, seeming to scorch up the little life left in the cattle, so that they died off now by the score, as their master looked helplessly on. The vegetation that still remained seemed to turn under the influence of the wind in a short time from a sickly green to a crisp brown; while two or three bower birds in the moistest place by the hillside, where they had patched up one of their eccentric nests, sat hour after hour, the hen over one dried-up egg, with a few yellow leaves crisp and rustling overhead; and the cock bird apparently wondering what would happen next.

And now came news, first from one station, then from another, when Harry learned that his neighbours were suffering more than himself; and in one place they were killing off all the least valuable stock, so as to contrive to save water enough to keep the rest alive. People were sending miles upon miles for a small portion of the life-giving fluid; and at water-holes where there was yet a fair supply the cattle lay dead and rotting around, so that the water was tainted, and in some cases quite unapproachable. Horses and cows lay everywhere in the runs, in all stages of decomposition; while the various carrion-feeders hung about, glutted and lazy.

"Bad enough, aint it, sir?" grumbled Joe; "but how should you like to do what Allens have done down at Cullum Creek?"

"What's that?" said Harry.

"Left everything in despair, and gone south, towards the larger towns, sir."

Travelling had become next to impossible, two days' journey often having to be made before that great necessary, water, could be reached, more than one horrible death from thirst being reported, and listened to with eagerness by men to whom news of any description was a rarity.

And so, gradually growing worse from week to week, when each in its turn had been looked upon as the climax, the drought continued during seven weary months, during which time the heat was often insufferable, and hardly a drop of rain fell. Harry had often taken his best horse, and travelled here and there in search of pasturage and water, but only to come to the conclusion that he stood as well or better than the average of squatters. For in one ride of a dozen miles he counted dead cattle by the hundred, and whenever he stopped there was for him the gloomiest of tidings, settlers having lost, some their hundred sheep, some their thousands, and more than one their tens of thousands.

At last, Harry rose one morning to gaze upon the desolation around, a desolation only equalled by that in his heart, as he saw how his hopes and the work of years had been swept away; his fine cattle gone; his sheep reduced to a few wretched, dwindled ewes; and hardly a horse left. Far as eye could reach was one desolate, dry wilderness, dotted here and there with

trees, while as for rain or verdure, it seemed as if the land were cursed for ever for the blood he had shed.

Despairing and dejected, Harry went back to the hut, to write home, when the thought of how all his sanguine hopes had been dashed, how he had toiled on, self-denying and earnest, year after year to arrive at such a pitch as this, made his burden seem greater almost than he could bear. He retired to rest that night feeling that he had failed in his endeavours after prosperity, and that he would have to give up his attempt at sheep-farming, and try some other means of placing himself in an independent position.

A fierce roar, and then silence deep and profound; another roar—a fierce, crashing roar as if mountains were splitting and crumbling into ruin, and Harry Clayton sat up in his bed-place, startled and confused, for the darkness around him was intense. Then came a loud rushing sound, as of a mighty wind; and dead leaves, sticks, small stones, and loose fragments and chips of wood, were dashed against the sides of the hut, which seemed to rock, while directly after several shingles were split from the roof, and the blast came hissing in, cold and damp.

"Hooray, sir," shouted Joe from the next compartment, "rain, and no mistake! It's a—"

The rest of the old shepherd's speech was cut short; for there

came, crackling and hissing as it were, a vivid flash of lightning, cutting through the dense blackness, and accompanied by a deafening peal of thunder. Then another flash, lighting up with its blue glare the interior of the hut; then flash and peal without cessation, the intense blackness of the sky seeming to be cut, jagged, and torn asunder—forked lightning, chain lightning, and vivid balls of electricity darting, playing, and falling from the murky sky. Then there was a few moments' cessation, as the wind—as the hurricane—came hissing furiously by, and the tent that had stood a few yards from the hut was dashed, poles and all, against the sides of the wooden building, and then, as though the windows of heaven were once more opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up, down came the rain, literally in torrents—in cascades,

beating upon the hut, and streaming in, not only where the shingles had been stripped off, but in every direction where the intense dryness had made splits and loosened knots in the wood. And all the time the wind beat at the door and window, roaring round the frail place, and seeming momentarily as if it would level it with the ground.

To stay in bed was next to impossible, and Harry was soon groping about in the dark to find the match-box; but having found it, he tried in vain to get a light, for the matches were wet, when he suddenly felt a hand laid upon his arm, and Joe's voice shouted in his ear—

"We shall be drown—" and again the speech was drowned in the fearful turmoil of the hurricane; for the rain beat, the wind blew, and the thunder seemed prolonged into one mighty peal, running through some

vast celestial tunnel to be at last disgorged in a roaring volley upon the earth. Light seemed now unnecessary, for the flashes illumined the hut, where the men, hastily dressed, now gathered; for in the slighter, lean-to part where they slept the rain was streaming through.

Harry's first thought was to go and see to the safety of the remainder of his sheep, and that the horses were secure, but Joe laid a hand upon his arm, saying in his ear—

"If you'll take my advice, sir, you won't stir outside these

planks—that is," he shouted, "if they'll only stand, and keep a roof over our heads."

At first Harry was for refusing the advice, but the slight opening of the door to reconnoitre was sufficient to make him call lustily for assistance to close it again; for it seemed as though the spirits of the storm were resisting all his efforts, and trying to force a way in.

"Rough, aint it, sir?" roared the old shepherd, as Harry stood wringing the water from his hair; "but Lord, sir, it's beautiful, and I could go and roll in it, and splash about with as much flourish as a young magpie. Why, the grass 'll be all green again in the morning."

Further speech was stayed by the shrieking of the storm, like despairing voices innumerable crying for



"WITH HER LITTLE JOEY."—(Page 65.)

help, sheep bleating, cattle lowing; and at times Harry looked inquiringly at the old shepherd, who, however, only shook his head, and went on fanning the fire which he had lit, though it was a battle between flame and water as the splashes of water came hissing down the broad chimney, turning glowing flame into black patches that sputtered angrily until, with constant feeding, the fire grew the fiercer, darting upward, save when a furious gust drove rain, smoke, and flame back into the hut.

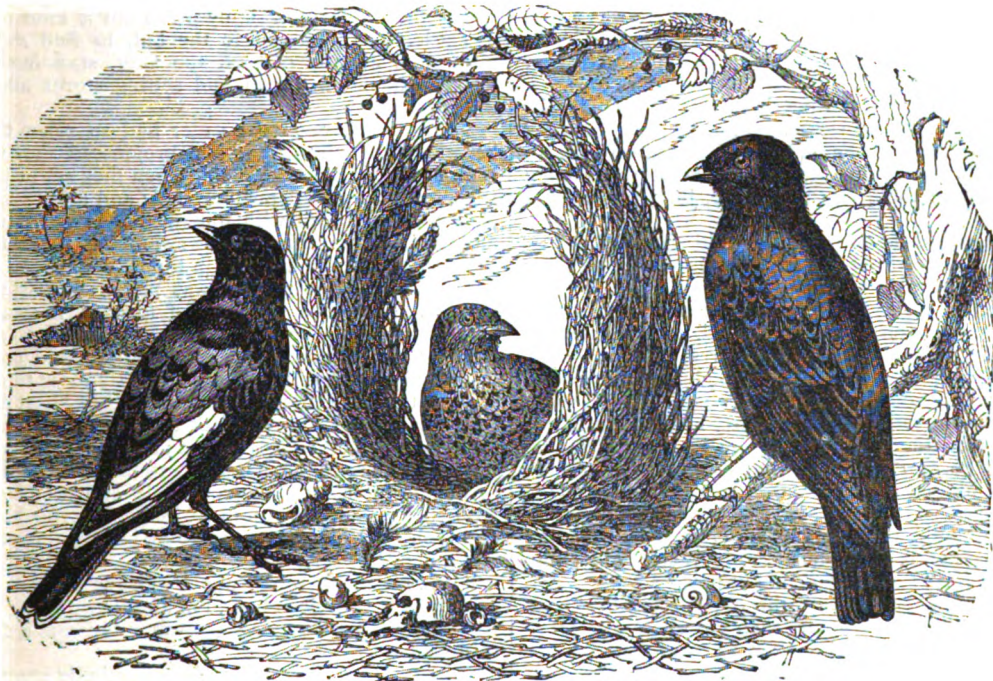
Sleep was out of the question that night amidst the furious elemental war, while to have gone outside would have been little less than madness; and besides, now that they had light, there was plenty of work to stop leaks here and there where the water dripped in,

gone, and the rotten carcasses swept away with 'em. Why, sir, you won't know the country again after a week."

"Not if the water goes on rising like this, governor," said one of the men, scraping the while more earth to the door, where the rain was mining its way in, and beginning to trickle through the little heaped-up bank.

At last, tired of the continuous roar, the first dread gone, but still unable to sleep, the men and lads grouped round the fire and lit their pipes, smoking in silence, for the din outside precluded all conversation; only at times one or the other was roused by Harry to stop some leak where the rain had found entrance.

Never at any time the abode of comfort, the hut



"TWO OR THREE BOWER BIRDS."—(Page 65.)

to fill up the gap where the shingles were ripped off, and scrape and shovel the earth up against the bottom of the door, where the water streamed in as if with the determination of swamping them out, while still the thunder pealed and the lightning flashed, cutting up the sheet of rain which descended with a mighty rushing wind hour after hour.

"Let it rain, sir," shouted the old shepherd. "It's like dropping sixpences, every spot doing no end of good. Only think of that hot ground soaking—it may well hiss; the cracks getting them dry, parched mouths of theirs filled; the rivers flowing, and the water-holes turned once more from sticky traps, to catch and stifle horses and beasts, into fine supplies for months to come! Where will the heat be and the dust after this, and the dry, ashy, blackened ground—eh, sir? All

now looked most desolate, lit by the ruddy glow of the blazing fire, shining fitfully through the clouds of smoke and steam rising from soaked garments and the loose boards which formed the floor. Now and then, too, the light would flash from some point near the door, while from their dirt-marked faces, whose washing of late had been only that performed by perspiration, since every drop of water had been of inestimable value to drink, the party in the hut might have been taken for some ruffianly horde whose aspect would have made a traveller pause before asking rest and shelter.

Morning broke at last, dim and heavy, with the rain still streaming down with tremendous force; while upon rubbing the little panes of the window, Harry found his look-out to be exceedingly circumscribed, for far as

eye could reach there was but water—water foaming and splashing with the falling rain.

"Aint not half enough yet, sir," said Joe, observing his master's anxious looks. "If this was to stop now, the thirsty earth would drink up every drop without waiting for the sun to take his share. Let it rain on."

"But the sheep and beasts?" said Harry.

"They'll be all right, sir, so long as it don't come down too much; plenty of high ground for 'em to get on to. That's the beauty of a bit of land like this. If it was a flat now, I shouldn't like it; but here you're all right, with the river to take the water off."

These remarks quieted Harry for the time, and he stood watching and trying to make out through the rain the shapes of some of the remnants of his flocks upon the nearest high ground. The thunder had now ceased, but heard above the hissing of the falling rain and its loud splashing upon the roof there was a low, deep roar, which he made out at last to be the water in the gully rushing furiously along, and apparently ever augmenting.

And now for the first time there arose an inquiry for Jerry, who had not been seen; but no one knew anything beyond the fact that he had been lying down beneath the shed along with the dogs the night before; but though the dogs were there by the fireside, Jerry was an absentee.

Harry looked inquiringly at the old shepherd.

"Oh! you need not be scared for him, sir," he said; "he's safe enough somewhere up a tree, or—"

Bang came a heavy blow upon the door just at that moment, and upon its being opened, accompanied by a rush of wind and rain, in came Jerry, his canvas shirt and trousers clinging to his lean body, and his coarse black hair pressed down upon his head.

"Rain—um rain fass," said Jerry as he came in, his bare feet sending the water flying in a circle round, while as he shiveringly pressed towards the fire, the men, laughing at the information he had brought, made way for him.

"Ribber full," said Jerry as he crouched down, and spread his hands over the blaze. "Water 'gin climb tree after Jerry; soon come in hut now."

"Think not, Jerry," said the old shepherd. "This rain will soon stop now, and then the water will fall."

But Jerry proved the better weather prophet, for though the rain became somewhat less heavy, the water continued to rise; and when, moved by uneasiness respecting what little stock he had, Harry and his men made their way out, they had to wade to where the sheep were huddled together upon the high ground. As to the cattle they were far out of reach, for between them and their owner ran a furious torrent—a mighty river was carrying away tree, bush, floating islands of matted grass, and more than one shape seen just above the muddy, turbulent water—forms of a black or reddish hue, that were too surely those of drowned cattle; and as he looked at the direction in which the water ran, a moment's reflection told him that if cattle were being drowned to float down with the stream, they were most probably some of his own.

A short time back, Harry would have been in agony, and felt that his prospects were blighted and his return put off, that the wealth he was trying to accumulate was slowly filtering away. But of late he had become inured to losses, and he could gaze upon the soddened,

swelling carcasses of a few cows or bullocks without the pangs of old. Now there was a grim smile upon his lip, and he wore a defiant aspect, which seemed to say, "Fate, do your worst, for I can be no harder dealt with."

Everything that water could move was being fast floated away, while pens, hurdles, and pieces of timber that had been cut at great cost in labour and dragged from the woody parts were even now being slowly lifted from the spots where they had lain by the rising water, and wavering before joining, by means of one of its thousand affluents, the mighty current which sped roaring through the gully.

Both master and men saw the folly of trying to secure the things around, and after wading about till they were tired, and seeking in vain a way by which the sheep could be driven to the hills by the gully side, where they could now dimly make out a knot or two of cattle, they returned to the hut, to find that the water had already covered the floor, standing some fourteen inches in depth, and setting stores afloat in the inner room.

Towards afternoon the water had so risen that it became evident that if it still progressed they would soon have to take to the roof. Then they set at liberty such sheep as were penned around; and taking one for leader, Joe plunged with him farther into the water, and then partly wading, partly swimming, he managed to cross a little depression in the land between them and the hills. The attempt was partly successful, for, giving the leader a good thrust forward, it swam on with many following, some to be swept away by the force of the current, others to pass the rapid portion, though a large proportion hung helplessly about the pens.

Joe's task had not taken him long, but short as the time was it had been sufficient to render the stream in the depression much more rapid; and during his return it seemed more than once to Harry that he would have to plunge in and try to save his old servant; but Joe struggled gallantly on until he could feel the bottom, and then he floundered up to where his master reached him a hand.

"Worse—much worse nor I thought for, sir. We shall have it terrible yet, sir, I'm afraid."

"I can't think where all the water can come from," said Harry.

"Come from, sir? Why, from hundreds upon hundreds of miles of country, where it has been streaming down; and that's the great fault of this country, that there's no great rivers to carry it off. There's one comfort, though, sir," said the old man, cynically; "other folks gets it as bad as we."

Harry could not see the comfort to be derived from other people's crosses; but there was no time to stay and argue the point, for every now and then some helpless, drowning sheep demanded their attention, while, as a rule, as fast as they helped some struggling woolly coat to the edge of the stream, and gave it a start, instead of swimming boldly forward to join its companions it would either turn helplessly here and there till swept away, or else, bleating piteously, struggle back to those who could give it no better aid.

"Come back, Joe—I'm sick of this," exclaimed Harry, after seeing a score of his finest ewes drowned before his eyes; and then they waded back to the hut.

From First to Last; or, Gwendoleen's Engagement.

CHAPTER IV.

AS our eyes met Gwendoleen blushed violently, and I felt most unaccountably guilty. Then came a loud ring at the bell. I hurried to answer the door. No Florance, but a telegraph boy with a despatch in his hand.

"Mr. Fairfax live here?" he asked.

"I am he," I replied, taking the telegram from his hand. I signed the paper, and then took the message into the studio to read it to Miss Ramsay. It ran as follows:—

"— Hotel, Croydon.

"From Florance Harford to George Fairfax.

"Broken my leg stepping into train. Send Paul immediately. Don't leave her on any account. Will write by post."

"Poor Florance!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears. "And we have been blaming him all this time."

And there was a touch of grim remorse in her tone; and she looked almost angrily at me, as if I had been the cause of her injustice to her lover.

"I am terribly perplexed to know what I had better do," said I. "Florance says 'Send Paul immediately.' I do not know where the boy is. Harford gave him leave to go out until nine o'clock. Then he tells me 'not to leave you on any account.'"

And then suddenly our eyes met, and we both burst out laughing.

"But, Mr. Fairfax," she said, "where am I to go? Can I remain here? I am not afraid of being alone. I am only afraid of one thing—"

"And that is?"

"Of being found and taken home," and her lip quivered. "Oh, Mr. Fairfax, you are a lawyer, so you must know! Do tell me. I am only nineteen: could they compel me to return home?"

"I am afraid they could."

"Promise me, then," she cried, seizing my arm, "that you will not give me up—that you will hide me, and that you will not let my mother carry me away."

And she looked up into my face with a piteous expression, very different to her usual stately calm—an expression that touched me to the heart, and made me feel that I would die rather than give her up. I could not meet her eye at that moment, and I turned my head away as I said—

"You may rest assured, Miss Ramsay, that I will do all I can to help you, for Harford's sake."

Hypocrite that I was! I almost hated Harford at that moment.

When she became a little more composed, we sat down by the fire, and began to talk the matter over quietly and dispassionately. It was out of the question, I told her, her staying where she was; but then, where was she to go to?

"Look here, Miss Ramsay," I said, after we had discussed and rejected one plan after another; "it is no use having any false delicacy with me; if I am to be of any use to you, I must know the whole truth. When were you to have married Harford?"

"This afternoon," she replied, without the slightest touch of embarrassment in her manner.

"By special licence?"

"Yes."

"Are you a ward in Chancery, Miss Ramsay?"

"No. My mother is my sole guardian, but she cannot disinherit me. I must come into fifteen hundred a year when I come of age, and as much more at her death."

"And—forgive me if I cause you pain—you were not happy at home, were you?"

"So unhappy that I hope never to return there. But this is a subject I would rather not discuss, Mr. Fairfax. All I ask you now is, will you help me? I am afraid in doing so you may run some risk yourself; so, if you would rather not, say so, and I shall not be offended."

"I will help you as far as lies in my power, I promise you," I said.

"Then I feel safe," she replied, heaving a sigh of relief.

It seemed strange to me that all this time she never once suggested going to Harford herself. It decided the matter to my mind. She could not be in love with him. I asked her if she had no relations living.

Only a brother of her father's, she told me, with whom her mother was not on terms—Valentine Ramsay.

"What—the stockbroker, who lives in Portland-place?"

"Yes; do you know him?"

"By reputation, well—as a very benevolent, kind-hearted, but eccentric man; and I have met him. Oh, Miss Ramsay, he is undoubtedly the person for you to go to. Never mind whether you know him, or whether he is on terms with your mother or not; he is your nearest living relative, and he must receive you."

"No, no, I cannot go to him, Mr. Fairfax. He hates the very name of his relatives. He would give me up to mamma."

"But if you do not go to him, nor to Harford—"

"I should certainly not go to Mr. Harford. I should wait for him to come to me," she interrupted me, haughtily.

"Well, then, you must go to your uncle; there is no alternative."

"Do you not know any one," she faltered out, "who would receive me until Florance is well?"

"No, I do not at this moment; and if I did, I should not apply to them until you had seen and asked your uncle to help you. If he refuses to accord you his protection, it will be time enough to look after another refuge. I do not wish to give you pain, Miss Ramsay; but I must remind you that more than your safety or happiness—your good name—is at stake. You have fled from your mother's house—I dare say you had very good reasons for doing so, but the world in judging you will not stop to inquire about that—and if it were known, moreover, that you were living in London alone, waiting for Harford to marry you, think how your enemies would talk. You must not be offended at my plain speaking. I am only acting towards you as I should wish any man to act towards my own sister were she in a similar position. You must look upon me as your legal adviser—a person who is privileged to speak the truth even when the truth may wound. You are not angry?"

She was silent for a moment, and then she held out her hand to me with a bright, sweet smile.

"No, indeed I am not. I know you are right. I will do as you wish."

I helped her on with her things, but I stopped her putting on a very thick black Shetland veil, with which she was anxious to cover her face. It is very odd, but whenever a woman wishes to escape notice, she invariably does that which attracts most attention towards her, and puts on a veil that makes her look as if she were masked. We decided to pick up a cab *en route*, as I did not wish to leave her alone whilst I went out to find one. It was a disagreeable evening; a thin, drizzling sleet was falling, a more effectual covering than any number of veils, I told her. She clung to my arm when we emerged into Holborn, and had to pick our way over the wet, slippery pavement, jostled every moment by the eager, pushing crowd. I hailed the first cab I saw, and told the man to drive quickly to No. —, Portland-place, for I remembered that I had to return to Gray's Inn-square to meet Paul at nine o'clock.

It was nearly half-past six when we passed the church of All Souls, Langham-place. A minute or two afterwards we pulled up at Mr. Ramsay's door. I had met the wealthy old stockbroker once or twice, but I did not know him personally. He was reported to be enormously wealthy, and really good-hearted, though brusque and disagreeable in manner. I was anxious, if possible, to hear from him something more about Gwendoleen's mother.

I hoped to learn something that would justify in my eyes the step Gwendoleen had taken. Evidently, passionate love for Florance was not her motive or excuse; then what was? To my mind, a girl needed some very strong reason for running away from home. Gwendoleen appeared far too wise to be indifferent to her good name, and yet she had unquestionably imperilled it. But I felt certain that there was some mystery which, when cleared up, would justify her. In spite of appearances, I instinctively believed in the girl.

"Mr. Ramsay was in," the man servant who opened the door informed us, "but dressing for dinner."

I sent up my card, and said that I must see him at once on important business. I was shown into the drawing-room, but Gwendoleen insisted on remaining downstairs. She would not see her uncle until I had spoken to him, so the dry-looking little butler ushered her into the library.

"I won't keep you longer in suspense than I can help," I whispered to her as we parted. She had quite recovered her composure by this time.

"Do not think of me," she said, quietly. "Say and do whatever you think best."

I remained in the drawing-room for nearly ten minutes before Mr. Ramsay made his appearance. He was a little man, with a bent figure, a puckered-up face, and a sarcastic expression that was anything but encouraging.

"I am afraid I have disturbed you," I began, apologetically.

"Never mind; they said you had come on important business. What is it? Pray, be seated."

I told my story as briefly as possible. At the mention of his relative's name his face clouded over at once.

"I don't wish to have any thing to do with that woman," he said. "A bad lot! I told my brother so when he married her. A fair woman, without discretion. A fair, false, wicked woman. Her daughter has run away from her, you say? I am not surprised—'What is bred in the bone comes out in the flesh.' It is in the blood, sir—it is in the blood. Why, that woman, sir, ran away from my poor brother, and he took her back. More fool he! and he never spoke to me again, to the day of his death, because I told him so. My poor brother!"

"But what I want you to understand, sir, is that this young lady, who appears very sensible and intelligent, is at this moment alone in London—homeless and friendless. If you will not receive her, what is to become of her?"

"Why, she must go back to her home, of course, as this young idiot has chosen to go and break his leg on his wedding-day. It is a great pity, all the same, that she could not be respectably married to some man who would take her out of her mother's set. Bad school for a girl—very."

"But don't you see, sir, she won't go back to her mother. She made me promise I would not give her up to her. But what am I to do if you decline to receive her? You must be aware that I cannot take care of her; and she is too young, and too handsome, to be living in London by herself."

"Why this repugnance to return to her mother?"

"That she is more likely to confide to you than to me. I did not like to appear to intrude into her confidence, but I could see plainly that there has been some quarrel between the mother and daughter."

"Ah! very likely. I have no opinion of Fanny Ramsay. She was a bad wife. I dare say she has been a bad mother. Poor girl!—very handsome, you say? Ah, well, she had better remain here for to-night, at all events."

"And you won't—if you can possibly avoid it—give her up to her mother? You see, I promised—"

"I wouldn't give a—a—rat up to Fanny Ramsay, so set your mind at rest on that point. Where is Gwendoleen?—at Gray's Inn?"

"No, she is downstairs, in your library."

"Downstairs! Bless my soul, why didn't she come up?"

"She wished me to break the ice."

"Ah, well, I am sure she ought to be very much indebted to you. It is very rare to see a young man nowadays who acts with sense and discretion. Very glad to have made your acquaintance. You'll stay and dine with us, Mr. Fairfax?"

I explained to him that I must return to Gray's Inn to meet Harford's servant, and despatch him to his master; but I promised to dine with him on the following day. I bade Gwendoleen good-bye, as I went downstairs.

"I shall run down to Croydon early to-morrow, Miss Ramsay, and see Harford; and I shall send him a line by Paul, just to set his mind at rest about you."

"Thank you so much, Mr. Fairfax; and for all you have done for me," she added, lifting her deep blue eyes to mine. "I shall never forget it," and her voice faltered. "What folly might I not have committed, but for you!"

"You exaggerate a mere trifle, Miss Ramsay," I re-

plied. "I am only too happy to have been of the slightest service to you."

"And you will not tell poor Florance that I was angry with him?"

"You may rely on my discretion. I am coming to dine here to-morrow evening, by your uncle's invitation (by the bye, make him your friend—he is a friend worth having, I am certain), and then I will give you the latest intelligence of Harford."

Arsenic-Eaters in Styria.

THAT there are persons who eat arsenic—that is, take it in doses, which in other cases are deadly—was asserted many years ago by Professor Schallgruber. They also formed the subject of an article by Tschudi, on arsenic-eaters in Styria and Lower Austria; and the communications were much commented on in English scientific literature. In 1857, Dr. Schäfer, then professor in the Medico-Chirurgical School in Gratz, communicated to the Academy of Sciences in Vienna a case of poisoning with Scheele's green, with a number of chemical researches on the absorption and elimination of the preparations of arsenic and antimony. He says: "At the request of the royal and imperial councillor, Dr. Von Vest, I took the trouble to institute some new observations on arsenic-eaters, and was able to subject one to experiment. Johann Wolfier, aged thirty, small, but strongly built, a woodman, had, he said, taken arsenic for twelve years. On February 21 he came under my observation. He said that he had already eaten some arsenic on that day. On the 22nd he took, in my presence, a piece of arsenious acid weighing just four and a half grains. On the 23rd he ate a piece weighing five and a half grains. While he was under observation, the man had a very good appetite, drank a large amount of alcoholic liquors, and went away on the 24th quite well. He is still alive, an Alpine shepherd, quite well and strong, and continues the use of arsenic. Unfortunately, he could not be prevailed on to come here."

Professor Schäfer has related these facts in a communication on "Arsenic-eaters in Styria," published in vol. xli. of the "Reports of the Imperial Academy of Sciences." This case is also given in Hasselt-Henkel's "Giftlehre" (Brunswick, 1862), with several other cases; such as one of a director of arsenic works at Salzburg, who, at the age of seventeen, began with three grains, and increased the quantity to seventeen grains daily, but in what time it is not stated. These facts, and the above-mentioned work of Dr. Schäfer, were made known in England, through a communication of Dr. Roscoe to the Philosophical Society in Manchester.

We give the following in the doctor's own words:—"Two young English physicians, Dr. Craig MacLagan, of Edinburgh, and Dr. Rutter, of London, became interested in the subject; and while travelling on the Continent in 1864, they came to Styria, and desired to convince themselves of the fact by personal observation. They went to medical councillor Dr. Vest, who introduced them to Dr. Macher, of Stainz, and to myself, then residing in Ligest. I had often heard that there were arsenic-eaters in Ligest, but had not yet convinced myself of the fact. I was, however, able to find two arsenic-eaters, who consented to eat arsenic

in the presence of the English doctors. On March 25 M. Schober ate nearly five grains of white arsenic. Flecker, whom I have the honour of presenting to you to-day, took, on March 26, a piece of arsenious acid weighing six grains, having on the previous day taken arsenic in the presence of several inhabitants of Ligest. The mouths of the arsenic-eaters were examined by the English doctors, to see whether they kept back the arsenic; they took away small pieces of the substance used, in order to ascertain that it really was arsenic.

"It is difficult to say definitely how far the practice of arsenic-eating extends. I have convinced myself that there are many arsenic-eaters in Upper and even in Middle Styria; a number of grooms, woodmen, and hunters are known to me as arsenic-eaters, and women even follow the practice. Many begin to use arsenic at the age of seventeen or eighteen, and continue the practice to a very advanced age. Most arsenic-eaters conceal the fact, so that it is impossible to obtain certain statistics. The principal reason alleged for eating arsenic is that it protects from disease, as in the case of the man Flecker; it is also regarded as a means of producing a ruddy appearance, as a remedy against difficulty of breathing, and as an aid to the digestion of food that is digestible with difficulty. A poacher in Upper Styria told me that he gained courage through the use of arsenic. I have seen in Zeiring a still very strong charcoal burner, seventy years of age, who was said to have used arsenic for forty years. In the 'Giftlehre' above quoted is related the case of a vigorous chamois hunter, eighty-one years old, who had long been accustomed to use arsenic. I have never observed arsenical cachexia in habitual arsenic-eaters. A case, however, occurred in Ligest, in 1865, in the person of a leather-dresser, who, when intoxicated, took too much, and had symptoms of acute poisoning. According to his account, he took a piece as large as a bean; he perfectly recovered, and later again used arsenic, but with more care. According to my observation, both white arsenic (arsenic acid or Huttenrauch) and yellow arsenic, or orpiment, are used in the dry state, either alone or strewed on bread. The dose is, of course, at first very small, and is gradually increased. The greatest quantity that I have seen taken is fourteen grains. The man Schober, above mentioned, took seven and a half grains in my presence, on April 17, 1865. The intervals at which the arsenic is taken vary much—fourteen days, eight days, twice or thrice a week. All doubt as to the correctness of the statement that there are arsenic-eaters ought to be forever removed by the existing proofs. J. F., aged fifty-five, a tailor, has taken arsenic, generally orpiment, since 1849. He was led to the practice by being obliged to go into a house where fourteen persons had died of typhus, and which no one would venture to enter; he wished to protect himself against the disease by the use of arsenic. He began by taking a grain daily for three days. Although at first he did not feel quite well, he had no vomiting, no irritation of the stomach. He now takes about six grains of orpiment once a week; more when he has to undergo greater exertion, or when his digestion is impaired. He says that the arsenic expels gastric flatus. According to his statement, his father also took considerable quantities of arsenic. He also knows many people in the neighbourhood of Ligest who take arsenic, many in larger

doses than he uses, and he says that they all enjoy very good health. P. H., aged twenty-five, a servant, residing in Schwanberg, while serving as a herdsman, noticed that the other herdsman gave arsenic to the cattle and took it themselves. He also tried it and became accustomed to it. He takes every eighth day a piece on bread or bacon, and has always been fresh and healthy; when he endeavoured to leave off arsenic eating he felt uncomfortable. In both these cases orpiment was generally used."

Things New and Old.

A Trick.

As I was passing along the Strand the other day I was started by a tremendous crash, and on turning round I found that a van laden with lamp glasses had come into collision with another vehicle, and a number of the glasses were smashed. Now, perhaps the general public is not aware that lamp glasses, though expensive to buy, are very cheaply manufactured. Owing to the prevailing ignorance of the secrets of the glass trade, the bystanders on the present occasion seemed quite awe-struck by the damage done, and considerable sympathy was felt with the driver, who looked ruefully at the shattered fragments which strewn the ground. An elderly gentleman of benevolent aspect eyed the chapfallen van-driver for a moment compassionately, and then said—

"My poor man, I suppose you will have to make good the loss out of your own pocket?"

"Ah! that I shall, sir," returned the van-driver, with melancholy emphasis.

"Well," said the generous philanthropist, "hold out your hat, here's a shilling for you, and I dare say some of these gentlemen will give you a helping hand too."

The van-driver held out his hat, several gentlemen dropped shillings into it, and humbler persons coppers, as tokens of sympathy. At last, when the contributions had ceased, the man emptied the contents of his hat into his pocket, and, with a knowing wink to a friend among the bystanders, pointed out the retreating figure of the disinterested philanthropist who had started the subscription, and said, slowly—

"Aint he a leary 'un; that's *our governor*!"

And so the public paid for the broken glasses.

Human Life.

From some elaborate tables drawn up by Dr. Farr, it would seem, as far as can be made out, that there are certain very critical periods in our career. A baby, for instance, has a very small chance indeed of growing up. But, on the other hand, the period between the tenth and fifteenth years inclusively is that in which the death average is the smallest. At or about thirty-five we must begin to take care of ourselves. At this period constitutional changes set in; our hair and teeth begin to fail us; our digestion is no longer what it used to be; we lose the vigour of youth, and neglect outdoor exercise; above all, the cares of life begin to make themselves perceptibly felt. It is at this time that deaths from suicide take a marked place in the returns of mortality, and there is also considerable reason to believe that habits of intemperance are apt to suddenly develop themselves. The picture, however, has its sunshiny

side. It would take, of course, a professed actuary to deduce from Dr. Farr's tables their exact result. It appears, however, that if a man tides over his fiftieth year he may make tolerably certain of living to seventy; while, if he reaches his seventy-fifth year, there is a very strong presumption that he will either turn his ninetieth birthday, or come very near it. A still more interesting question is opened by the series of tables which show the average mortality in different professions and pursuits. Gamekeepers are, for obvious reasons, the healthiest class of the whole population; clergymen and agricultural labourers come next, and are followed by barristers; solicitors and business men are less fortunate; while, at the extreme end of the scale, come unhealthy pursuits, such as printing and file-grinding.

A Rebuke.

A handsome lady entered a dry goods house, and inquired for a "bow."

The polite clerk threw himself back, and remarked that he was at her service.

"Yes, but I want a buff, not a green one," was the reply.

The young man went on measuring goods immediately.

Ancient Ordnance.

In a book entitled "The Gunner," date 1664, it is said that Uffano states that the invention and use as well of ordnance as of gunpowder was in the eighty-fifth year of our Lord made known and practised in the great and ingenious kingdom of China; and that "in the maretime provinces thereof there yet remains certain pieces of ordnance, both of iron and brasse, with the memory of their yeares of founding engraved upon them, and the armes of King Vitney, who, he saith; was the inventor."

In the life of Apollonius Tyanæus, written by Philostratus 1,500 years ago, we find, in reference to the Indians called Oxydra—"These truly wise men dwelt between the rivers Hyphasis and Ganges; their country Alexander the Great never entered, deterred not by fear of the inhabitants, but as, I suppose, by religious considerations; for had he passed the Hyphasis, he might doubtless have made himself master of the country all round him; but their cities he could never have taken, though he had led a thousand as brave as Achilles, or the thousand such as Ajax, to the assault. For they come not out into the field to fight those who attack them; but these holy men, beloved by the gods, overthrow their enemies with tempests and thunderbolts shot from their walls. It is said that the Egyptian Hercules and Bacchus, when they overrun India, invaded this people also, and, having prepared warlike engines, attempted to conquer them. They made no show of resistance, but upon the enemy's near approach to their cities they were repulsed with storms of lightning and thunder hurled upon them from above."

Caterpillars.

A poster bearing the following eloquent appeal has been posted around some of the suburban districts in Boston:—

"Kill your caterpillars! Don't let them overrun your own grounds and those of your neighbours. Burn 'em! Squeeze 'em! Stamp 'em! Crush 'em! Rub 'em out! and merit the gratitude of coming generations!"

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

CHAPTER XXXI.—VERY DREAMY.

TREVOR heard it afterwards from Fin, how that mamma saw Captain Vanleigh when he called with Sir Felix; Sir Hampton leaving a note, and—so Fin declared—hiding in the gardener's toolhouse till the visit was over; that she had, at the earnest wish of Sir Felix, seen him in the drawing-room.

"Where he made the most downright booby of himself you ever saw," said Fin.

And the result was, that one morning, after the most elaborate fencing had been going on between Trevor and his guests, one vieing with the other in politeness, Pratt met his old schoolfellow on his return from Tolcarne with—

"Thank goodness, Dick, there's peace in the grove."

"What do you mean, Franky?" said Trevor, who was rather uneasy at having heard from Lady Rea that Sir Felix and Vanleigh had been up to the house while he was away with the girls, and had a long interview with Sir Hampton and Aunt Matty.

"Mean, Dick? Why, that the telegram has come at last—message from St. Kitt's—Vanleigh and Flick wanted directly in town—so sorry couldn't stop to say good-bye, and that sort of thing."

"Then they are gone?"

"Yes. I ordered round the waggonette; and Mrs. Lloyd seems in ecstasies at the clear-out, and is getting ready to bestow a benediction on me—for I must be off next."

"Nonsense, Franky; you are happy enough here."

"No, old fellow—this Sybarite's life is spoiling me, and I must go."

"Why not follow my example, Franky?" said Trevor, laughing.

Pratt shrugged his shoulders, and the matter dropped for the time being.

The next evening the Reas dined at Penreife in great state and dignity—all but Aunt Matty, who steadily refused pardon, and turned her back upon Trevor; while Sir Hampton preserved a dignified composure upon the matter, as if submitting of necessity; for—

"Mark my words, Hampton," his sister had said; "this ridiculous marriage will never take place. I should as soon expect Finetta to be espoused by that wretched little companion of the seafaring man."

Sir Hampton grunted, and went to the dinner, which he thoroughly enjoyed, and softened a good deal over his wine; after which, the evening being delicious, he allowed himself to be inveigled into the grounds, where Trevor asked his advice respecting some new forcing-houses which he proposed having, listening to him with deference; and at last, when they strolled in through the open drawing-room window, Sir Hampton said aloud—

"Er-rum—yes, Trevor, I'll come over with Cutbush—say Wednesday—and he shall mark out the lines on the same plan as mine. I think I can put you in the way of many improvements."

Directly after, he was settled in an easy-chair, with his handkerchief spread upon his knees, thinking—with his eyes closed; and while he thought, everybody spoke in a whisper, for it was a custom with Sir Hamp-

ton Rea to think for half an hour after dinner—with his eyes closed: he never took a nap.

Lady Rea, looking rosy, round, and warm, was presiding at the tea table; and Tiny, blushing and happy, was rearranging some flowers, Frank Pratt helping her in a loving, deferential manner, very different from his general easy-going way; while Fin had caught Trevor by the arm, led him into the far window, and forced him back into a chair, before which she stood, holding up a menacing finger.

"I'm ashamed of you, Dick—I am indeed," she said, sharply.

"Ashamed!" he exclaimed. "Why?"

"Such cunning, such artfulness! I didn't give you credit for it."

"What do you mean?"

"Coaxing pa round like that, when you no more want hothouses than I do. There, go away, sir; I'm disgusted. Look! ma's beckoning to you."

In effect, Lady Rea was cautiously making signals from the tea tray; and on Trevor going to her, Pratt slowly crossed to the window, and began to talk to Fin.

"Do you know, Miss Rea, I find I've been down here six weeks," he said, awkwardly.

"You don't say so, Mr. Pratt?" said Fin, quietly.

Pratt stared, and went on.

"The time has gone like magic."

"Has it really?" said Fin, demurely.

"Yes," said Pratt, a little bitterly; "and as I have decided upon returning to town in a day or two, I thought I'd take this opportunity of saying good-bye."

"I think it's the very best thing you can do, Mr. Pratt," said Fin, sharply.

"What, say good-bye?"

"No, go back to town. You will be industrious there. See what's come to your poor friend by mooning about in the country."

She nodded her saucy head in the direction of Trevor, who was bending over Tiny—she looking shily conscious and happy—while Lady Rea beamed upon them both; and Sir Hampton thought so deeply with his eyes closed, that he emitted something much like a stertorous snore.

"Yes, dear old Dick's very happy," said Pratt, gravely. "Rich, loved, and with the future all sunshine. She's a sweet girl."

"Yes, a rose—with a thorn of a sister, ready to pester her husband," said Fin. "Yes, Mr. Pratt, you had better go. It is not good for young men to be idle."

"So I have been thinking," said Pratt—"especially poor fellows like myself."

"How is our little friend?" said Fin, maliciously.

"What little friend?"

"The little, round-cheeked niece of Mrs. Lloyd—Polly, isn't her name?"

"Really, I don't know, Miss Rea," said Pratt, smiling.

"Fie, Mr. Pratt!" said Fin. "Why, you are always being seen with her in the lane. Is it true you are to be engaged?"

Pratt looked at her sharply.

"Does it give you so much pleasure to tease?" he said, quietly.

"Tease? I thought it was a settled thing."

"I don't think you did," said Pratt, quietly.

"Well," said Fin, laughing, "Mr. Mervyn told me the other day that—oh, look at that now!"

The last words were said by Fin to herself; for as she mentioned Mr. Mervyn's name Pratt turned slowly away, and going to a table, began to turn over the leaves of a book.

In the meantime, Lady Rea had had a few words with Trevor.

"I declare I felt quite frightened of her, my dear."

"It's her way only," said Trevor, smiling in her face. "She nursed me like a mother, Lady Rea; and she and her husband have for years almost done as they liked here, only checked by the agent and my poor father's executors, who seem to have come down once a year to look at the place so long as they lived; but they have both gone now."

"She looked dreadfully cross, though, at Tiny—just as if, my dear, she was horribly jealous of her. And now, Richard, my dear, you won't be offended if I ask a favour of you?"

"Certainly not," said Trevor, in the same low whisper in which the conversation was carried on.

"Then make her send that niece of hers away. After what you told me, I'm sure it would be for the best; because, while she is here, the poor woman will always be thinking of her disappointed plans."

"Well, but," said Trevor, smiling, "I was thinking of hurrying on her marriage with my bailiff, Humphrey; the poor fellow is desperately fond of her, and, as far as I can make out, the feeling is mutual."

"Oh, if that's it," said Lady Rea, "pray don't do anything to make the young people unhappy."

"Yes, Trevor," said Sir Hampton, "fifty feet by twenty will be the size."

And the conversation was carried on in voices pitched now in the normal key.

The distance was so short that it was decided to walk back through the moonlit lane, and as Trevor and Pratt accompanied the party, it was as a matter of course that Fin should walk papa off first, Lady Rea following with Pratt, and Tiny lingering behind in the silvered arcades—dreamy, loving, too happy to speak, and feeling that if life would but always be the same, how could they ever tire?

Here, in the rugged lane, all was black darkness, and the gnarled tree trunks seemed to spring from sable velvet. A few yards farther, a sheaf of silver arrows seemed shot down through the foliage upon the laced ferns that rose like a tiny forest of palms; down by their side there was the rippling tinkle of water, gurgling amongst stones; and again a few steps, and a pool shone like molten silver. Above all, the air was soft, humid, and balmy; and love seemed breathed in the gentle wind that barely stirred the leaves. They had no need to talk, for it was very sweet; and they could foresee no black clouds to come sweeping across their horizon.

Tolcarne gates at last, new and crest-crowned—good-bye—and then out cigars, and a matter-of-fact walk back, the young men both too dreamy to speak. And after a brief "Good night, Dick, old fellow"—"Good night, Franky, old boy," each sought his room—Trevor thinking the while of Lady Rea's words, and how that he had hardly seen Polly lately, while he had been too happy in his love to so much as think of Mrs. Lloyd

and her baffled plans. For her part, she seemed to have avoided him ever since she had heard of the engagement that he had made.

"Ah, well," he said, smiling, as he gazed from the open window at the moonlit shimmering sea, "all these things come right in the end. What need have I to trouble, with life so pleasurably spread out before me? Heigho! I don't deserve such good luck; but I think I can bear it like a good man and true. I wonder, though, whether Frank really cares for little Fin!"

Ten minutes after, Trevor was dreaming happily of his love, without a sign of cloud or storm in his sunlit fancies; but they were gathering fast the while.

CHAPTER XXXII.—A LITTLE CONFESSION.

BUT Mrs. Lloyd, though quiet for a time, and letting matters rest till the termination of Vanleigh and Sir Felix Landell's visit, was anything but dormant.

The fact was, that Vanleigh had been in the way upon more than one occasion. When Polly had been sent for a walk in the hope of enchanting the "young master," Vanleigh had met her, and been so attentive that the girl had come back at last, sobbing and almost defiant, telling her aunt that sooner than be so treated she would run away back to the mountains in Wales.

This put a stop to it for the time, and Aunt Lloyd waited, hearing rumours that the two London visitors were engaged to the young ladies of Tolcarne, and rubbing her hands thereon, for these were threatened rivals out of the way.

Her encounters with Trevor had been few and far between; but all seemed satisfactory, and, to use her own words, she "bided her time."

When the news came to her ears, endorsed by the sudden departure of the visitors, and further endorsed by the many visits to Tolcarne, and lastly by the coming of the Reas to Penreife, that Trevor was engaged to Valentina Rea, the woman was furious.

"It shan't go on, Lloyd—I won't have it. I'll put a stop to it. He shall marry Polly, or—"

"Martha, Martha!" cried her husband, wringing his hands—"you will ruin us."

"Ruin! I'll ruin him—an upstart! I'll have him on his knees to me. After the way in which I brought him up, to turn upon me like this. He shall marry Polly!"

"How can you be so mad?" groaned Lloyd. "Oh, Martha, think of our old age."

"Think!" said Mrs. Lloyd, contemptuously—"I do think. Mad? Isn't a girl with the blood of the Lloyds in her veins better than the daughter of an upstart London merchant? There—hold your tongue; and don't you interfere. I'm not going to be stopped in my plans, so I tell you. Lloyd, are you asleep?"

"No," said her husband, with a heavy sigh, "I wish I was, so as to forget my troubles."

"You dolt!" exclaimed Mrs. Lloyd. "Have you seen Humphrey hanging about lately?"

There was no answer.

"I say, have you seen Humphrey hanging about or talking to Polly lately? I don't want to think the girl artful; but she has been very quiet, and I hardly like it. Lloyd, do you hear what I say?"

There was a long-drawn breath for reply, and Mrs. Lloyd went on making her plans—giving her husband the credit of being asleep.

But the latter was very wide awake, and he had seen something that night of which he did not wish to tell. For while Mrs. Lloyd had been busy with the company that evening, there had come a soft tap on the housekeeper's room window, whose effect was to make little Polly turn violently red in the face, begin to tremble, then, after listening at the door, steal out, little thinking that the butler had seen her go.

Of course it was very artful and very wrong, but it is an acknowledged fact that there is a certain magnetism in love; and, to go back to the simile before used, when the loadstone came what could the industrious little needle do?

The next morning, after breakfast, Mrs. Lloyd called Polly to her.

"Found out at last," thought poor Polly.

And she went shivering up to her stern-countenanced aunt, with the recollection of twenty sweet but stolen meetings on her conscience.

"Go and put on your white muslin dress and blue ribbons, Polly," said her aunt.

"Are we going out, aunt?" faltered the girl.

"You are, my dear," said Mrs. Lloyd; "so put on your hat—the new one, mind."

"Please, aunt, I'd rather not go," faltered the girl.

"Go and dress yourself this minute," exclaimed the housekeeper, firmly; "and look here, if you dare to cry, and make those eyes red, I'll punish you."

Polly shivered, went to her room, and came back, looking as pretty a little rustic rosebud as could be seen for miles around.

"Ah," said Mrs. Lloyd, hanging about her with a grim smile on her face, to give a pull at a plait here, a brush at a fold there, and ending by smoothing the girl's soft hair—"if he can resist that, he's no man."

"Please, aunt, what do you mean?" pleaded the girl. "Don't send me out again."

"There are no captains about now, 'goose, are there?" said the housekeeper, angrily.

"No, aunt, dear," faltered the girl; "but don't send me out. What do you mean?"

"What do I mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Lloyd; "as if you didn't know what I mean. To raise the house of Lloyd, child—to make you mistress of Penreife—"

"Oh, aunt!"

"—instead of letting you throw yourself away upon a common servant."

"Aunt—aunt, dear!" cried the girl, piteously.

But the woman stopped her.

"Not another word. Now, look here—do I speak plain?"

"Yes, aunt."

"Hush!—no crying. You are to be Mrs. Richard Trevor, with a handsome husband, and plenty of money. If you don't know what's good for you, I do. Now go out for a walk; and when he meets you, if you don't smile on him, and lead him on, I'll—I'll—There, I believe I shall poison you!"

The girl turned, shivering, from the fierce-looking face, as if believing the threat, and hurried out of the house.

"If Humphrey don't take me away I shall go and drown myself," she cried, with a sob. "Oh, it's dreadful! He will hate me for this, and if Mr. Richard sees me, what will he think?"

Poor Polly's life had been a very hard one. So accustomed was she to blindly obey, that it never occurred to her that she might take any other route than the one so often indicated by her aunt; and she went as usual—ready to cry, but not daring, and thinking bitterly of her position.

"If I had only been a man," she thought, "I'd run away to sea, and—here he is."

"Ah, little maiden," exclaimed Trevor—for Mrs. Lloyd had timed the matter well—"why, how bright and pretty you look."

"Please, sir, I'm very sorry," faltered the girl.

"Sorry! Why? Have you come out here," he continued, suspiciously, "to meet Humphrey?"

"Please, sir—no, sir," said the girl, looking appealingly in his frank face.

"Having a walk, then, eh?"

"Please, sir, aunt sent me," said the girl.

"Polly, my little maid, I believe you are a good girl," said Trevor, his face growing dark—"there, don't cry, I'm not angry with you. Speak out, and trust me. You are not afraid of me?"

"Oh, no, sir. Humphrey says you're so good and kind," said the girl.

"Thanks to Humphrey for his good opinion," said Trevor. "But, now, tell me plainly, what does all this mean?"

"Please, sir, I dursen't," sobbed the girl.

"Nonsense, child! Tell me directly."

"Aunt would kill me," sobbed Polly.

"Stuff, child! Now, be a good, sensible little girl, and fancy I'm Humphrey."

"Oh, sir—please, sir, I couldn't do that."

"Come, come, speak out. Now, do you come of your own accord for these walks?"

"No, sir. I—I—Aunt makes me."

"I thought so—I supposed so," said Trevor. "And why do you come?"

"Oh, sir, don't ask me, please—don't ask me," sobbed Polly, now crying outright.

"Now, look here, my little girl; if you'll speak plainly perhaps I can help you. Now, once more, why do you come here? There, there, don't cry."

"Oh, please, sir, it's—it's aunt's doing."

"Well, well, child, speak," said Trevor, and he took the girl's hand. "It makes me cross when you will keep on crying."

"Pray, sir, don't—pray, don't," she sobbed, trying to withdraw her hand. "Oh! what shall I do?"

"Speak out," said Trevor.

"Aunt—aunt thinks, sir—wants, sir—you to marry me, sir; and oh!" she cried, throwing herself on her knees, and holding up her little hands as in prayer, "I do hate you so—I do, indeed."

"Thank you, little one," exclaimed Trevor, laughing merrily. "There, Polly, get up before you stain that pretty dress with the moss. Wipe your little eyes, and leave off hating me as soon as you can, and you shall marry Humphrey."

"Oh, sir!" faltered Polly, rising.

"There, little one, go and walk about till your eyes are not red; and if you should see Humphrey down by the long copse, where they are repairing the ditches, tell him I shall want to see him about three—no, stop, say this evening. I am going for a drive."

Polly hesitated a moment, and then caught and

kissed his hand, shrinking back the next moment, ashamed at her boldness.

"There, I thought you would not hate me," said Trevor. "I'll go back at once and see your aunt. You sha'n't be unhappy any more, little maiden."

"Oh, pray, sir!" cried Polly again.

"I'm master here, my child; and I won't have anybody about me made unhappy if I can stay it. Now, trot along."

The girl gave him one timid glance, and then went on, while he turned in the direction of Penreife.

Before he had gone far, though, he turned back, with a smile on his lip.

"I'll wager a sovereign," he thought, "that Humphrey was not down at the long copse, but pretty close at hand, watching for the safety of his sweetheart."

He walked sharply back to a curve in the woodland path, and found that he was right; for some distance ahead he caught sight of Polly's pretty muslin dress, and across it there was plainly visible a bar of what resembled olive velvet.

"Right," said Trevor, smiling. "Well, why shouldn't they be happy too? Now, then, to have it out with Mrs. Lloyd."

The Man in the Open Air.

A POWDER manufactory, one would suppose, would be about the last place to look for quiet and seclusion, or in which to find ourselves mated with wild birds of comparative scarcity. Yet such is the case. The Dartford Powder Mills opened its gates to us on a Saturday, and a right pleasant time we had of it amongst the glorious rooks, and siskins and Dartford warblers; not to say anything of wood-pigeons, thrushes, blackbirds, and feathered songsters at every corner, and on every bough and bramble. The fact is, these extensive grounds are a second Waterton domain. A gun is seldom or never heard in its precincts; and if an occasional "blow" does wake up the echo of its fastnesses, the rooks merely take it as a matter of business, and, after a flight skyward, return to the tall poplars, and their nests, and their young, without any apparent recollection that a few barrels of powder had been wasted—for what did it matter, since it was not upon them?

Certainly, the birds appear to have it pretty well their own way, and in this respect they are better off than the denizens of the main streams, and its many tributaries and mill-feeders. Alas! it is not so many years ago that we could settle down on the bank of this once prolific river Darent, and in the course of a few hours fill a large bag with handsome perch and roach, with an occasional leviathan carp from the mere; but now we do not believe there is a fish to be had between Dartford town, past the powder factory, and up to the first paper mills. It is a lamentable thing to reflect that rags cannot be bleached and rendered available for the paper upon which we write or print, without a large proportion of the caustic soda escaping into the water and destroying the fish. But such is the fact; and thus all the trouble and expense of Mr. Pigou, one of the powder mills firm, in the attempt to stock the river with trout, is year after year frustrated, and he and others are occasionally compelled to see handsome fish which

have strayed out of the smaller streams floating, blind and dead or dying, almost at every yard.

It is a curious sight to witness the effect of the churning of the mill wheels upon the water thus charged with soap and alkali, which is now worse than washed; and as far as we can learn up to the present time, there is no remedy, although hopes of one are entertained by the riparian proprietors by combined action at law. Meetings have been held and funds raised for the purpose of seeking redress, but paper manufacturers appear to have it all their own way; and what is a stream and its fish, or its anglers, compared with tons of note or foolscap!

But this is not the only grievance with which these powder mills, in common with others, have been recently visited; the new Explosive Act, we hear, having thrown so many laws and regulations over the works, that this coming season, we are told, will see gunpowder as high as 4s. a pound.

Some of the white thorn in these grounds are amazingly fine, and there are one or more of these trees the haws of which carry double stones. Attempts have been made to rear the Australian gum tree without success. The leaves and stems of these trees are held in high estimation for disinfecting rooms, and they are presumed to possess the valuable power of keeping off fevers. The odour, however, is by no means agreeable, and is to some olfactories overpowering.

There is a simple contrivance of the roofs of the powder mills which prevents, in the case of an explosion, the timbers being carried into the air and thus doing more mischief. On the higher parts of the roofs, the boarding is fastened with the same security as at the eaves, the consequence of which is they fall over and outwards like the lid of a box.

Plant Minds.

AS Dr. Forbes Winslow has remarked, vegetable life is so universally assumed to be, as a matter of course, unconscious, that it appears to many a mere folly to express a doubt of the correctness of the assumption. But, he continues, let a close observer and admirer of flowers watch carefully their proceedings on the assumption that they not only feel but enjoy life, and he will be struck with the immense array of facts which may be adduced in support of it. Endow them hypothetically with consciousness, and they appear in a new and altogether different aspect. His conclusion is that they are undoubtedly in the same category in this respect with the lower forms of animal life, respecting which it is impossible to determine whether they have consciousness or not.

Dr. Lander goes farther, and regards mind and all its essential or concomitant phenomena as common in various senses to plants, the lower animals and man; and he backs his belief with a cogent array of evidence, which, while it fails to demonstrate absolutely his position, shows very clearly the drift of scientific opinion.

Dr. Asa Gray, after speaking of the transmission of the excitability of sensitive plants from one part of the plant to another, the renewal of excitability by repose, and the power which the organs of plants have to surmount obstacles to positions favourable to the proper

exercise of their functions, goes on to say that, when we consider in this connection the still more striking cases of spontaneous motion which the lower algæ exhibit, and that all these motions are arrested by narcotic or other poisons—the narcotic and acid poisons producing effects upon vegetables respectively analogous to their effects upon the animal economy—we cannot avoid attributing to plants a vitality and a power of making movements towards a determinate end, not differing in nature, perhaps, from those of the lower animals. Probably, he adds, with characteristic cautiousness, life is essentially the same in the two kingdoms; and to vegetable life faculties are superadded in the lower animals, some of which are here and there indistinctly foreshadowed in plants.

Darwin has observed in the *Drosera rotundifolia* a faculty for selecting its food, which in animals would certainly be attributed to volition. Mrs. Treat has described the same trait in the plant. On being deceived by means of a piece of chalk, the *drosera* curved its stalk glands towards it, but immediately discovering its mistake, withdrew them. The plant would bend towards a fly held within reach, enfold it, and suck its juices; but would disregard the bait if out of reach, showing not only purposive movement (or a refusal to move, as the case might warrant), but also a certain power of estimating distance.

Again, Darwin has shown that the more perfect tendrils bearers among climbing plants bend towards or from the light, or disregard it, as may be most advantageous; also that the tendrils of various climbers frequently attached themselves to objects presented to them experimentally, but soon withdrew on finding the support unsuitable. He says of the *Bignonia capreolata* that its tendrils “soon recoiled, with what I can only call disgust,” from a glass tube or a zinc plate, and straightened themselves. Of another *bignonia* he says that the terminal part of the tendril exhibits an odd habit, which in an animal would be called an instinct, for it continually searches for any little dark hole in which to insert itself. The same tendril would frequently withdraw from one hole and insert its point in another. In like manner, spirally twining plants seem to search for proper supports, rejecting those not suitable.

Speaking of phenomena of this sort, Dr. Lindsay makes this strong remark:—“In carnivorous and climbing plants there is a choice or alternative between action or inaction, acceptance or refusal; and the choice made is not always judicious. There may be an error, and the error may be corrected; but, in order to such correction, there must surely be some kind of consciousness or perception that a mistake has been committed; an exercise of will in making further efforts at success, and a knowledge of means to an end, with their proper adaptation or application.”

According to Professor Laycock, organic memory is common to both animals and plants, and certain *lianas* seem to exhibit it in a marked degree in their antipathy to certain trees. The botanist Brown has remarked that the trees which the *lianas* refuse to coil round are physically incapable of supporting the climbers.

And not only do many plants act, as one might say, reasonably, but some exhibit the opposite quality. In his “Vegetable Physiology,” Professor Lawson speaks of the eccentric movements of the side leaflets of *Hedy-*

sarum gyrans, which make it appear as though the whole plant were actuated by a feeling of caprice.

In many cases observers are, no doubt, self-deceived, and mistake a mechanical and wholly unconscious mimicry of intelligent action for an actual exhibition of intelligence; still, such men as Dr. Gray and Mr. Darwin are not apt to be deluded by mimicry or figures of speech; and however much it may run counter to popular notions of what is proper to plant life, the hypothesis that intelligence does not end with animal life seems by no means inconsistent with a multitude of trustworthy observations.

Sketches of the Central Wilds.

BY A WALKING WALLABY.

X.—FLOATING AWAY.

THE day passed away, and the short twilight came on, the rain still incessantly falling, and the flood rising higher and higher, till as far as eye could reach was one large lake, dotted as it were with islands. Now it was a tree that stood above the water, tangled with dead grass or bushes that had floated down and clung to its branches; where the streams were swiftest, large tree trunks rolled over and over, rising and falling as they glided along, sometimes presenting their tangled roots above the water, but only to slowly dip down again, and let the leaf-stripped branches rise.

“Can’t go on much longer, sir,” Joe kept saying.

But at last Harry, who had been making notches in a wooden post, and seeing first one and then another covered, referred to Jerry, and asked him what he thought.

Jerry was very busy binding three or four good-sized pieces of wood together; but on being spoken to he ceased from his task a minute, looked at the waters as they rushed along, and then, merely giving for a reply a shake of the head, showed plainly enough what he thought by continuing to bind the pieces of light wood together.

“Does he mean that for a little raft?” whispered Harry.

“Safe, sir,” said Joe, uneasily.

And his master, placing implicit faith in the black’s knowledge and forethought, gave his orders; when, from half a dozen meal-tubs and some planks, a slight raft was contrived whose buoyancy made Jerry grin with delight, as he floundered through the water, climbed upon it, and danced about, apparently astonished to see how little it sank with his weight.

The old shepherd rather laughed at this contrivance, which Harry had securely moored to the side of the hut for a means of escape should the water rise high enough to cover the roof, though so high was the spot that Joe declared such a thing to be impossible. However, that night was passed upon the sloping roof—a cold, wretched, sleepless night, while morning found the party sitting astride the ridge, with the water lapping their feet, and the stream setting so fiercely against the building as to threaten to sweep it away.

“Shows what good builders we are, lads, anyhow,” said Joe. “Some places would have set sail hours ago; but I rammed them posts myself, and didn’t spare elbow grease.”

One, two, three more weary hours passed, with the

shudder-engendering wash-wash of the water incessantly in their ears, and rousing them with a shiver, when, worn out with watching, heads sunk and eyes closed.

"I never see nothing like this," said Joe at last; "and I've seen some floods, and the water rising thirty or forty foot; and that's why I stuck out for having the hut here, sir, though you said it was a windy spot. Why, the water's riz sixty foot at the very least. What do you say, old man?"

"Much big waters," said Jerry, quietly. "Good job, wass way dam black fellers."

"Ah," said Joe, "if it only did that, and no more mischief, I don't think we should grumble much."

"Is there anything more in the shape of food you can put on the raft, Joe?" said Harry.

"Not as I see, sir, without diving down after it, and that aint in my way. I larnt to swim atop of the water, and that's all I can manage. Sure to come across a drowned bullock or two if we are hard drove."

Harry shuddered—perhaps only with the cold—and then gave the order, when carefully man by man took his place upon the raft, round a tub nailed in the centre to act as storehouse, and then the rope which held them to the hut was cut.

They had clung to the roof till the last, in the hope that the waters would begin to fall; but now that the ridge was nearly covered, that hope seemed vain, and they slowly floated away, their whole attention was taken up in watching that they were not dashed against some floating tree, or capsized by getting entangled in the branches; for so light was the contrivance that very little would have sent the whole party struggling in the water. As for means of guiding the raft, they had none, Joe using the barrel of his rifle to thrust off branch or log; and at times every caution was necessary as they neared what appeared to be little bushes which peered above the water, but which a moment's consideration told them were the topmost branches of goodly trees.

More than once they passed some huge pine, whose top was still fifty or sixty feet above the surface; but the stream swept them by when they would gladly have secured the raft to its trunk.

Jerry seemed rather to enjoy the novelty of his position, and squatted down, grinning and chattering "like a tame baboon," as Joe observed, till the black began to feel the pinching of hunger, when he drew a smile even from despairing Harry by the coolness with which he made a demand for "muttons."

Floating along with the stream, now swiftly, now slowly, now remaining in some eddy, to be swept into still water, and remain for a few minutes almost stationary, till, gliding out again, they would be whirled swiftly round and onward, but going they knew not where, for the face of the country was completely hidden—save here and there an island or a distant ridge, on one of the former of which, to make matters more cheerful, they came upon one of the rather too common perched-up tombs, where some poor fellow was sleeping his last sleep, watched by the dingoes, tired of leaping up at that which they could not reach, while vultures and crows wheeled round and round.

At times Harry thought that they must be following to a great extent the course of the river, but it was impossible to tell; and at last, completely

wearied out, one by one, men and lads, sank down upon the wet planks and slept heavily.

But there was one watching who, almost mechanically, guided the frail raft amidst the various dangers it encountered, as, desolate of spirit, he mourned over this last great reverse. There was a name on his lips, too, again and again, as he thought how he had determined to return home rich, and make glad the hearts of all there. Had he not said that he would come back wealthy to claim his wife, and had he not fully believed in his ability to do so? At his age he was ready to believe that it was in the power of every man to prosper, if he would only fight on with energy and determination till he had achieved his object. And had he fought on? Fought! The word produced a shudder, as he thought of the blood that had been shed in defence of the Gully. He asked himself if all his misfortunes had been a curse; but reason told him that but for his energy the news would, in the course of months, have crept up to Sydney, and been chronicled in the newspapers, that there had been a massacre at a new station, Gurra Gully, where the blacks had evidently taken a pioneering party unawares, and murdered them all. In what, then, was he to blame? What had he left undone? The same answer always came back—he had been too venturesome, and ought to have been content to settle where, though his plot of land would have been smaller and less productive, there would have been protection at hand.

He looked at the past in every light. Now his thoughts would be in England—the England that he told himself he could never again face as a beggar. Now he would wonder whether Patty would wait, and whether, after all, his was not a mad, boyish, foolish dream. Then he would be busy again thrusting off tree, bush, clumps of tangled undergrowth, washed out to float away like a little island, or perhaps the dead carcass of a beast or sheep.

At last, weary with watching, and worn out with grief and despair, Harry roused the old shepherd, who started up with an apology.

"Aint been asleep five minutes, sir, have I?" said Joe.

"About five hours, I should think, Joe," said Harry, smiling.

And then, letting his head sink upon his arm, Harry determined to lie there and rest, and think for an hour or two, his position being, he thought, too dangerous for sleep. The water plashed against the tubs, and rippled beneath them; while always floating, as it were, around came a deep, low, lulling hum—the murmur of the rushing waters ever hurrying towards the swollen channels that should bear them to the sea. It was the low, deep, exulting shout of a conquering army laden with spoil.

"A dangerous—extremely dangerous position," reasoned Harry. A few planks loosely nailed to the tubs, and all deeply sunk, bearing more than was right. One good heavy blow against a tree trunk, and they must be all struggling for life. Then came once more the thoughts of the comfortable home in England, and he wondered whether, knowing how hazardous a life he led, a prayer was ever offered up for his safety—thoughts that brought up a little candid face once again, gazing into whose eyes he could see but the reflection of himself.

Then again the rippling water, the thought of danger; and then—all blank.

"Ahoy—hoy—hoy!"

"Ahoy—hoy—hoy! Yes, it's all very fine to shout," grumbled Joe, as he sat by his master's head upon the raft; "but what's the good of shouting?"

Harry Clayton started up, to find that it was bright moonlight, and at some fifty yards' distance they were passing the roof of a house where three or four people were clinging.

"Ahoy — ahoy!" shouted the same voice again. "Help, here! Will you leave us to drown?"

"What's the good of shouting, I tell you?" grumbled Joe again. "What the tarnation can we do with a thing as sails about just where it likes, and 's now right off for the old country seemingly?"

"For God's sake, take us off," cried the same voice, "or we shall be swept away."

And then there was a loud splash, followed by the shrill shriek of a woman.

Then there was nothing to be heard but the rushing sound of many waters, till they heard the panting of some one near

at hand, and made out the head of a man vigorously swimming towards the raft.

Harry was willing enough to render aid, but the men murmured, and not without reason, for the raft was already burdened beyond its strength; but he anxiously watched the coming of the swimmer, for the raft floated on, and at times it seemed doubtful whether the poor fellow could reach them.

But now they were caught in the eddy formed by the high ground upon which the house stood, and turning slowly, they floated back towards the hut, whose sun-bleached shingles shone full in the moonlight.

"Haul him on," growled Joe; and, in spite of forebodings, hands enough were stretched out to haul the

nearly exhausted man on board, the water lapping over at the side where he lay.

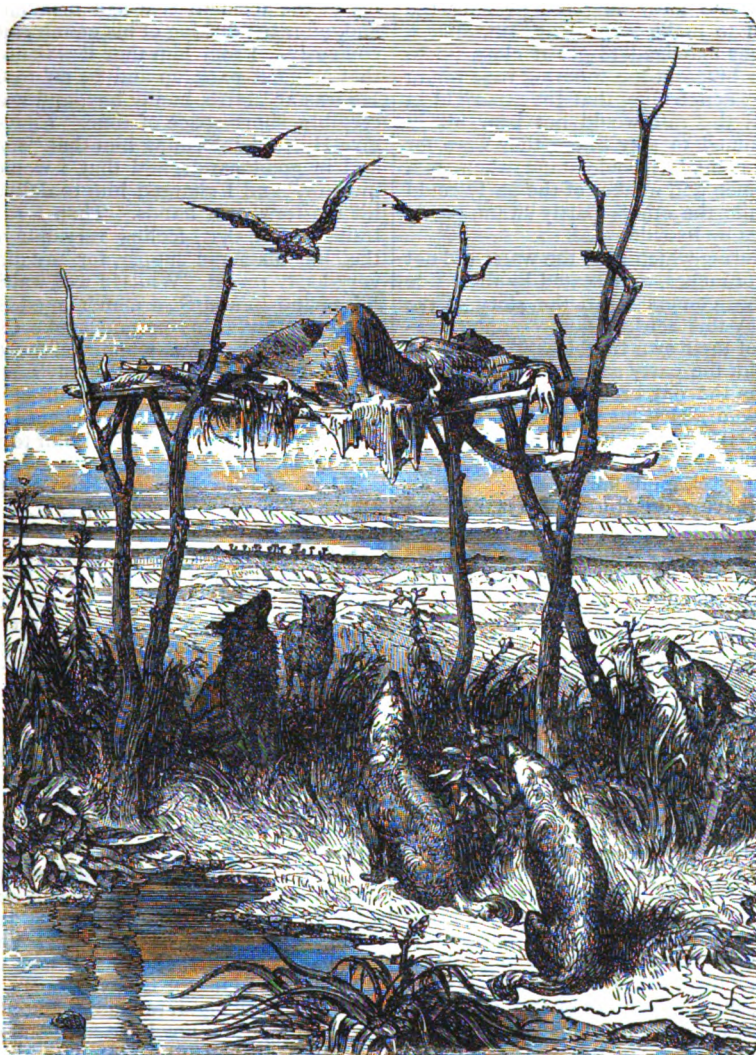
"Let me get breath, and I'll tug you back," gasped the new-comer. "Save them too—wife, child, and boy. Don't leave them."

Had it not been for the setting back of the eddy, no power that they could have exerted on board the raft would have sufficed to take them to the hut; but during the next few minutes the rough float approached nearer and nearer, so that they could plainly discern the faces of those on the ridge of the hut, when, once more, the raft was caught by the current and began to turn.

Till now the man had lain panting where he had been dragged, watching the

progress of the raft, as if satisfied that his bold effort had turned it towards his flooded home; but no sooner did he see it waver and slowly turn, as if to increase its distance, than with a cry of despair he leaped off the side and began to swim back.

The raft rocked as the man spurned it with his feet; but before the disturbance had ceased, Harry was over the side with the mooring rope in his hand, and, shout-



"WATCHED BY THE DINGOES."—(Page 78.)

ing to Jerry to follow, was breasting the flood in the wake of the man, trying at the same time to tug the raft towards the house, with Jerry running like an otter by his side, and helping with all his might.

"There, over the side, some of you, and lend a hand," growled Joe.

He set the example by plunging into the stream.

And then the others lowered themselves into the water on either side, and, swimming and pushing, the lightened raft began to make some way, till, after a vigorous struggle, they managed to get it close up to the gable end of the hut, and the mooring rope round the chimney-stack; when, feeling that Joe was right in his declaration that the raft would not bear all in safety, it was determined to stay where they were for the time, or as long as the hut would stand, when, as a last resource, the women and weaker of the party could be upon the raft, while the others partly swam, partly supported themselves by its side.

An hour passed, during which time the water did not rise above a couple of inches, and, seated by their side upon the roof, the new-comers heard the story of the sufferings endured by this settler's family—only, however, a counterpart of their own troubles.

Shivering with cold, the party sat out the remainder of the night, when as the day broke Harry found that the pale, terror-stricken girl at his side was in his eyes exceedingly beautiful; for a resident in a desert, with only an occasional black gin to gaze upon, has a tendency to make the fair sex more fair.

But Patty might have seen Harry's every act and look unmoved; for his thoughts, after the first glance, were all directed towards the saving of life. This was no time for gallantry, with the water still rising, though perhaps slowly—at last, not above an inch in two hours; but still it rose, and there seemed every probability that before long they must take to the raft.

Fortunately the house was strongly built, though more than once, when the flood surged heavily against the shingle roof where they clung, there was a strange vibration which whispered of timbers burdened with more weight than they could bear, and at such times the men would make a rush towards the raft, in spite of their master's orders and threats.

We hear and read of how in times of peril well-trained and disciplined men have stood to their posts obeying orders when death stared them in the face; but in a case like this, where only the relationship between master and servant existed, one which the primitive life in the wilds tended more towards making that of master and friend, especially where there was the bond of union against a common enemy, there was little chance of an order being obeyed, and it was more often by beseeching that Harry persuaded his men to stay by the tottering house.

"It's no good, sir," the men said, more than once; "the place can't stand, and we'd better make a start of it."

But Harry was of a different opinion; for at last he could come to the certain conclusion that the waters rose no higher, but kept to about the same level. Then hope began to warm each breast once more, for there was a gradual but perceptible fall of an inch, then of another, and another—a hopefulness augmented by the warm beams of the sun, which now broke through the heavy clouds.

From First to Last; or, Gwendoleen's Engagement.

CHAPTER V.

I RETURNED to Gray's Inn-square, taking a chop at my club *en route*, a little before nine o'clock. Paul arrived soon afterwards. He was overwhelmed at hearing of the accident that had befallen his dear master, and, after the fashion of his countrymen, began to weep copiously. I told him that it was no time for tears—that he must pack up and be off to Croydon at once. He was an active, handy boy, and was ready in an incredibly short space of time. I gave him a note to give Harford, informing him that "somebody was well, and in good hands, and that I would tell him all to-morrow," and I charged him to deliver it himself into his master's own hands. Then I saw him off by the train. After that, feeling very hungry, I returned to the club for some supper, for my dinner had been a very hasty repast. Whilst I was waiting for my grilled bones and B. and S., a man named Schröder, whom I knew slightly, came up and spoke to me. Schröder was one of those men whom you meet everywhere. He knew everybody and everybody's affairs, and was a tremendous gossip, but not an ill-natured one, as gossips go. I knew that he had spent the previous winter in Rome, and I gradually led him to talk of that place and its society.

"I wonder if you ever met an old friend of mine at Rome—Florance Harford," I said at length, incidentally.

"The painter, do you mean? Oh, dear, yes. I know him very well. Handsome fellow he is—and he knows it, too, doesn't he? He was running after that pretty Miss Ramsay all last winter. They said he was engaged to her. Good-looking girl, but can't hold a candle to her mother! she is a splendid creature—*si bien conservée*—looks more like four and twenty than forty."

"I have never seen Mrs. Ramsay," I said, anxious to draw him on; "but what sort of a girl is the daughter? Harford is an old schoolfellow of mine."

"I believe she is a good sort of girl; clever, too, they say. I never cared about her. I don't admire those marble-looking women, and she is too stand-off in her manner. I don't fancy she and her mother quite hit it off. I should think they both had tempers; they look like it. The report in Rome was that Mrs. William Ramsay was engaged to Lionel Vane, Lord John's third son; and that she was furious with her daughter for refusing to marry Dicky, Lionel's youngest brother, who is a shocking reprobate. But the girl was determined she would not have him, and quite right, too—he is an awful young scamp; and, besides, she had evidently a soft corner in her heart for Harford. You know, my dear Fairfax, between ourselves, Mrs. Ramsay is not quite *sans reproche*. The nice English in Rome looked very coolly upon her, I can tell you; and it will be a good day for that girl when she marries, and leaves the maternal nest. But mind, my dear fellow, all this that I have been telling you is in confidence. Mrs. Ramsay was always very civil to me, and I should not like her to think—"

"Oh, no, of course not, I understand—you may rely on my silence," I replied; thinking to myself, "What

an idiot the fellow must be to tell all this in confidence to a club acquaintance! However, I am not likely to repeat his story."

I had learned all I wanted to know. I knew now the secret of poor Gwendoleen engaging herself to Harford, and of her flight from home. Beset on all sides, she had decided that a loveless marriage was preferable to an unhappy, disreputable home. If only her uncle would prove her friend, and keep her with him! Luckily for me, I had heavy arrears of work to make up that night, and no time for indulging in day-dreams, or I might have found myself thinking more than was good for me of the marble face and blue eyes of my friend's *fiancée*. As it was, a long and tiresome conveyancing case claimed my whole attention, and it was long past midnight when I lay down to snatch a few hours' sleep before starting off by the early train for Croydon.

I found Harford better than could be expected, but in one of his most tiresome moods—irritable and discontented. Illness is the crucial test of a man's disposition, and there was a good deal of the baser metal about Florance. When he was well and prosperous he was just a good-humoured, selfish, conceited animal; but with good health and prosperity the good-humour vanished, and only the selfish, conceited animal remained. He was furious when he heard where Gwendoleen was, and with whom.

"The last person in the world I wished her to go to," he exclaimed, savagely.

"Then, pray, may I ask to whom you did wish her to go?" I inquired, very coolly.

"Well, I thought you really might have found some place for her, where she could have remained till I got well and could join her."

"You seem to forget, Harford," I replied, sharply, "that it is not customary for a young lady to run away from home without some search being made for her. Supposing that I had placed her in lodgings, and that she had been tracked and discovered! A nice story it would have furnished for the scandal-mongers."

"Oh, of course, it would have compromised you; but I really thought—as a friend—"

And then I heard him muttering something about selfishness.

"It is you that are selfish, Harford," I said, "to think of such a thing—to wish to sacrifice your future wife's good name to your own pleasure and convenience."

Then he began unbraiding Gwendoleen for her want of affection for him.

"She does not care for me, George, a bit; or she would have come down to see me to-day."

I felt fairly provoked.

"How can you be so unreasonable, Harford? Do you suppose her uncle would allow her to come down to a strange hotel, alone with me, to see you? The idea is preposterous!"

Then he changed his tone, and became lachrymose.

"Ah, George! I know you think me an unreasonable fool, and so I am; but you little know how I love that girl—how entirely every thought of my life is bound up in her. It would kill me to lose her. I was obliged to come down here yesterday to see somebody on business who was too ill to come up to town. Nothing but sheer necessity would have induced me to leave London,

but I thought I should be back in a few hours; and so I should have been but for this confounded accident."

And he began to swear furiously, and to weep afresh.

I pitied him for his misery, but I really began to think that Gwendoleen had cause to congratulate herself on her temporary respite.

"Heaven help the woman," thought I, "who has to lean through life upon such a poor creature."

Suddenly he appeared to regret what he had been saying, and returned to the old story of Gwendoleen being "frantically in love with him;" of which I believed now as much as I pleased. He assured me she had been enormously admired in Italy, and might have married any one she chose. I am not certain that he did not insinuate that she might have made a royal alliance, but she preferred him.

At length I rose to take leave. Florance was very angry with me for going away, but I told him I was obliged to be at Westminster by eleven, and that I had risen very early in order to pay him this short visit; but he appeared scarcely grateful, and I left him consoling himself with a volume of Swinburne. I did not tell him that I was going to dine with Mr. Ramsay that evening. I thought the less said that could possibly agitate him the better; for the surgeon had ordered him—so Paul told me—to be kept very quiet. I asked him if I could say anything for him to Miss Ramsay. He replied "No," that he was writing to her.

When I entered Mr. Ramsay's drawing-room that evening at seven o'clock, I found Gwendoleen sitting alone. She rose as I was announced, and came forward to greet me.

"I am happy to be able to give you good news of the invalid; he is getting on capitally," I said, as we shook hands.

"How very good of you, to have been down to see him, Mr. Fairfax."

"Not at all; I was anxious to ascertain for myself how Florance was going on, and to be able to give you the latest intelligence. But perhaps you have heard; he said he was writing to you."

"Oh, yes, I have heard," she said, coldly, as if the letter had not afforded her unmixed satisfaction; and the entrance of Mr. Ramsay at that moment put a stop to our conversation.

After dinner the old gentleman and I had a long chat together. He seemed to have quite taken me into his confidence, and told me a good deal about his family. He was evidently strongly prepossessed in Gwendoleen's favour, which I was glad to find.

"She takes after her father," he said; "she is very like him in face and manner, and in disposition too, I should say. There is nothing of her mother in her, as far as I can see. I only hope the bad blood won't break out; but no, I think she inherits her father's character."

The hereditary transmission of qualities was a very pet theory of her uncle's, Gwendoleen told me afterwards.

The old gentleman asked me a great many questions about Harford and his family. I told him all I knew, which did not amount to much. I had known Mr. and Mrs. Harford very slightly, and I had never seen either of them since the old Rugby days. How, when, or where Mr. Harford died, I knew not; but I had heard that he died very suddenly. Mrs. Harford was a confirmed invalid, and led a very retired life. Flo-

rance very rarely referred to her, and I never heard him speak of any other relatives. I must not forget to mention that Mr. Ramsay informed me, amongst other things, that he had written to Mrs. Ramsay, with Gwendoleen's acquiescence.

"I told Gwen," he said, "how ridiculous it was of her, not wishing me to communicate with her mother; that she was putting herself in the wrong by pursuing such a line of conduct; and, as matters stand now, she has right on her side. She had ample excuse for leaving her home as she did—ample. Her mother is a more wicked woman than even I ever thought."

"But wasn't Miss Ramsay afraid of her mother insisting upon her returning home?"

"I pointed out to her that that was all nonsense. Insist! Bah! I should like to catch Fanny Ramsay talking about 'insisting' to me."

When I entered the drawing-room, Gwendoleen was seated at the piano. She did not hear my approach, and I was at her side before she knew I was in the room.

"What are you playing, Miss Ramsay?" I asked.

She started.

"I thought you were downstairs, Mr. Fairfax. I was not playing. I was only running my hands over the keys."

"Don't you call that vagueness of purpose?" I said, with a smile.

She laughed.

"The end of labour is to enjoy rest. I have been hard at work all to-day, and now I am indulging myself by dreaming in the firelight."

I wondered if her dreams were happy ones. She was looking rather sad, I fancied. I asked her if she would sing me a song.

"I know so few by heart," she replied, "and I have no music here; but I think I can remember 'The Fishers.'"

I am no judge of singing. I know nothing about it. I have never had time in my busy life to cultivate the fine arts, but I thought her voice remarkably sweet; it had a very touching quality, and thrilled me to the heart.

"Some must work and some must weep."

"Do you agree with those words, Miss Ramsay?" I asked, when the song was done.

"I think all should work, and I don't feel in a particularly sympathetic mood with those who weep to-night."

I noticed a sternness creep into her face as she said this.

"That idiot has been saying something in his letter to ruffle her," I thought.

"I agree with you thoroughly that all should work; and if there were only more work there would be less weeping. Idleness and neglect of duty are the chief sources of tears in this life."

She sighed heavily, and made no reply. Old Ramsay had thrown himself into an arm-chair in the front room, and fallen fast asleep; so we were alone.

"Miss Ramsay," I continued, in a low voice, "I have known you a very short time, but I have known you under circumstances that have ripened our intimacy quickly, and made me feel that we are friends; so I shall claim the privilege of a friend, and speak—as I

have done before—very plainly to you. I can see you are put out about something this evening, and I am afraid Harford's letter is the cause of it. But you really must not let it annoy you. You must not heed what he says. He is ill, and, like too many of his sex, bears illness badly. He is low, and irritable, and discontented just now, and—"

"And he vents his lowness, and his irritability, and his discontent upon me. It is so pitiable to see a man give way like that."

"I think he will be different when he is married. He is one of the people who would weep less if he worked more. You will inspire him, and make him work."

She shook her head sadly.

"I am afraid not. The man who won't work for work's sake—who won't do right merely because it is right—won't be influenced long by any woman, least of all by a wife. Florance is not a man to set a very high value on anything when it is once his own. Admiration, gratified vanity, the triumph of winning what he knows somebody else wants—that is what he calls love. Besides, I am not strong enough, nor good enough, to influence any one, Heaven knows! I need guiding myself. What a woman admires and respects in a man is strength—moral as well as physical. She would look up to her husband with reverence, not down upon him with pity. Oh! Mr. Fairfax, you who are strong, and brave, and true, you cannot feel any sympathy with a character like Florance Harford's."

I saw that his letter must have wounded her deeply. His words must have stung her to the verge of madness before she would have spoken of him to me thus. I felt a pang of self-reproach at the unmerited praise she bestowed upon me. Strong and true! Alas, I began to fear I was neither the one nor the other.

Strong! when one look from her shook my best resolutions. And true! If Harford could have read my inmost thoughts at that moment, he might have called me by a very different name. I rose abruptly from my seat by the piano, and walked into the next room, waking up Mr. Ramsay by so doing. And then he engaged me in a long political discussion, during which Gwendoleen slipped out of the room. She did not return until tea was brought in. I avoided any further *tête-à-tête* with her for the rest of the evening, and we bade each other good night rather coldly.

"Where you doubt, abstain," I muttered to myself, as I walked briskly down to the club. "Doubt! I have no doubt upon the matter: I know that I am falling in love. This girl is engaged to another, and that other is my friend. Am I becoming such a weak, dishonourable fool that I can't stifle the feeling? I must and I will. It never brought any good yet interfering with *le bien d'autrui*. I'll keep away from the house for the present, and I dare say a week or two's hard work will drive all this nonsense out of my head. I never was such a fool before. But the hardest part of all is, that I believe she would have cared for me had she been free."

AN amusing blunder worth reproducing was made by a Constantinople paper the other day. Speaking of the affair of General Belknap, the American Minister of War, it remarks:—"This affair should be studied in connection with that of General Schenck and the woman Emma Mine (*et de la femme Emma Mine*).

Effects of the Sun on Lunatics.

A THEORY, once universal, and even now not very uncommon, exists with regard to mad people, to the effect that the light of the moon exercises a prejudicial influence upon the human brain. Indeed, the idea, now lingering only among the uneducated and superstitious, is preserved in the term "lunatic." Science and common sense, however, it was thought had pretty effectually disposed of the notion that the rays of the "cold orb of night" abstracted the wits of unfortunate folks who exposed themselves to their malevolent light. But a rather curious instance has arisen of the way in which sometimes excessive scientific efforts lead to conclusions similar to those blindly and wildly jumped at by the extraordinary and mysterious *savans* of the middle ages. The doctors of the tenth century believed that the moon caused madness, and now a doctor of the present century has been found who boldly declares that the sun cures madness. Dr. Ponza, an Italian physician, has been in communication upon the subject with Father Secchi, the renowned Jesuit astronomer, also, it would appear, a convert to the novel remedy, and from the letters of the doctor and the priest we gather some particulars of the scheme which, if successful, would turn our lunatic asylums into institutions for the production of optical effects. It must be admitted that the matter cannot be dismissed as wholly ridiculous, for that strong different coloured lights exercise peculiar effects upon people cannot be denied. Who, for example, can restrain the feeling of irritation which involuntarily creeps over one after a prolonged stay in a room where the sole or even predominant colour is scarlet? Or, again, who has not experienced the warm, comfortable, and gay sensations which crimson surroundings convey to the mind; or the sobering and quieting effect of prevailing dark blue; or, finally, the oppressive and saddening influence of a chamber draped in black? Of course, it may be said that these feelings are merely the result of association of ideas, and that if the mind be overthrown or perturbed, the same causes would not produce the same effects. We may be told that we are saddened at the sight of black because we are taught to connect that sombre hue with death; that crimson cheers us because custom and education have induced us to think of it as an attendant upon comfortable affluence and worldly prosperity. However, be this as it may, Dr. Ponza and his Jesuit correspondent are of a different opinion. They maintain, or at any rate from their letters we may reasonably suppose they maintain, that the chemical action of a red-coloured ray of light is sufficient to restore to its normal condition a brain whose molecular structure has undergone that change which results in melancholia. In like manner, it is said that by confining a raging lunatic in a blue chamber a similar operation is performed, and the violent patient becomes calm and sane. "A patient," we are told, "was made to pass the night in a violet chamber; on the following day he begged Dr. Ponza to send him home, because he felt himself cured, and, indeed, he has been well ever since." The request was very wisely, we think, refused; for is it not possible that the patient cured by the violet end of the spectrum, some day might chance to come under the influence of the red? If such a misfortune should befall him, ac-

cording to Dr. Ponza's theory, the red colour must result in a return of the violent maniacal symptoms. The only plan that could be safely adopted, if colour-cured lunatics were to be let loose upon us, would be to render it compulsory that they should wear spectacles with coloured glasses. And even that might fail. For instance, if a man with blue glasses were to look at a yellow surface, it would appear green. We are not informed what the effect of green is; but if the patient were an Irishman or an Orangeman, it is pretty certain startling results would accrue. Perhaps a better idea would be that the *ci-devant* madmen should be compelled to dress in their curing-colour, as a correspondent a little while ago suggested railway passengers should do in the colour of their classes. If this were done, people would be careful not to exhibit irritants in their presence, in the same way that red rags are hidden from bulls. Perhaps, on the whole, however, it will be better if we adhere to our old and better understood methods of treating those unhappily afflicted with mental disorder, and permit Dr. Ponza to test his medical spectrum analysis upon the lunatics of his own land.

Things New and Old.

A Frosty Saturday Night.

The weather suddenly turned into a freezing rain, Saturday evening. While the change was progressing, several people were in the library selecting mental pabulum for over Sunday. The rain fell silently and froze thoroughly, and in a very short time the walk which leads down from the library building to the street was a glaze of ice.

The first person who appeared at the door was a young lady, with a volume of Tennyson hugged up to her. She tripped lightly down from the step, saying audibly—

"Even a wild moor with love my heart—"

Then she got up, recovered her muff and book, looked apprehensively about to see who was in view, and then hastened home, without quoting another line.

She had scarcely cleared the walk, when a tall man, with a work on botany, emerged from the door. The instant he stepped on the walk he said, "Holy cryptogamous!" and crawled off into the snow on his hands and knees, and recovered the volume, which remained on the walk, by the aid of his cane.

Following him were two large men. One of them had the autobiography of John B. Gough. They both stepped on the walk together. The Gough man was just saying—

"I am confident that the downfall of men is to be attributed to rum—"

Two conspicuous exceptions to his belief were immediately made manifest.

The Gough man in going down had sufficient presence of mind to catch hold of his fellow, and, both being heavy men, they went the whole length of the walk, clawing and kicking each other all the distance.

The Gough man got on his feet and put off in one direction, and the other man got on his feet and sloped at once in an opposite direction. And while they were doing this a tall, spare man, with a book descriptive of the Holy Land, put his foot on the walk, then shook

it at the heavens, and met the pavement with the simple ejaculation—

"Oh, Jerusalem!"

The *débris* of this wreck was no more than cleared away when a very stout man, with a florid countenance, and a copy of Tyndall in his hand, came out. He was saying to himself—

"We have now got down to the base—"

Gosh—whoop—and was down there.

It was a terrible but brief struggle. There was a shooting of legs, a waving of arms, and a spasmodic wriggle of the body, and the base was reached. And for two minutes he sat there, feeling around for an under-set of false teeth, and swearing like a pirate.

The next morning was the Sabbath—a bright, quiet, sunshiny morn, and the son of the librarian went out on the walk, and in a very few minutes had accumulated a book cover, a set of false teeth, three gloves, a handkerchief, and a good-sized handful of hairpins. These articles are now at the library awaiting identification.—*Danbury News*.

China-Mania.

I am not a china-maniac, nor am I a connoisseur in any of those brittle articles of vertu a taste for which is one of the usual premonitory symptoms, I believe, of incipient insanity. But I have a friend who knows a thing or two about glass, and would, if he could, I have no doubt, live in a glass house, with all the furniture of the same material.

This glassy friend dragged me, the other day, to Powell's great glass manufactory in Whitefriars, to inspect their new system of toughening glass, and satisfy himself of the merits of the glass thus toughened. Tumblers, I observed with regret, had under the new system quite lost their old brittle qualities, and so far as they are concerned, the domestic cat (whose propensity for smashing glass and crockery is proverbial) will find her occupation gone. These tumblers are beyond even feline powers of destruction. I was relieved, however, to find that the wine glass still defies all attempts to expunge its brittleness. I am told, however, that even the wine glass will be eventually constructed of toughened glass in two portions, capable of separation and union at pleasure. This device, however, I am inclined to think, is not a novel one. I do not wish to cast any slur upon the inventive ingenuity of Messrs. Powell, but the following story will, I think, prove that the idea of constructing wine glasses in two parts, capable of being screwed together, had occurred to the brain of an unknown genius long before their firm had evolved the idea. A Cornish gentleman, with whom I was slightly acquainted, on one of his visits to town, purchased a large quantity of wine glasses with the fashionable straw stems. The glasses arrived late in the evening, and the butler proceeded to unpack them. What followed may perhaps be attributed to the fact that the butler was, as butlers sometimes are, "*screwed*." (N.B. This is a goak, the point of which will appear later on.) In the process of unpacking and dusting them he broke every stem, and placed each glass gravely in two pieces in the cupboard. When his task was completed, he adjourned to the servants' hall to supper, and, in a thick voice, announced to his fellow-servants the following piece of intelligence:—"I shay, mashter's been and done a

sensible thing at lasht. He's been and bought a new short o' wine glasses in London, and they *all unscrews in the middle*—isn't that a handy notion?"—*Man about Town*.

A New Fire Extinguisher.

Important experiments have been made in New York in extinguishing fires by a new process. The *New York Herald*, of March 1, reports that in the presence of General Shaler, members of the fire department, and gentlemen connected with the Board of Underwriters, the Chamber of Commerce, and insurance companies generally, the Connelly fire extinguisher was exhibited in an open lot at the corner of Fifty-ninth-street and Eleventh-avenue. A large frame building had been erected, in which were placed three cylindrical reservoirs filled with carbonic acid gas, and adjacent were eight other cylinders used as receivers, from which the gas escaped into the hose. An immense pile of barrels—two barrels deep, and about five barrels high, the pile containing altogether 130 barrels of refuse resin, both ends of the barrels being open—stood at the east end of the lot. A smaller pile of boards, with two barrels of refined oil on top, like the funeral pyre of Brutus, stood a little east of the resin, and to the westward was a tank 4 ft. deep, built of brick and cemented, and having a surface area of 600 square feet, containing 375 gallons of crude petroleum, and into which sluice pipes emptied water. The tank full of oil and water was fired first, and a tremendous mass of flame and smoke arose, driving the crows right and left by the intense heat. In less than five seconds this great mass of flame, as thick as four or five ordinary brick houses, and three times as high, was extinguished by the stream of water expelled from the hose by the force of carbonic acid gas. The noise made was like that caused by a thunderstorm rushing through a mountain pass. Next the 130 barrels of resin were fired, and were extinguished in less than six minutes by a rapid stream ten times stronger than that which could be expelled by a steam engine from a nozzle of the same diameter; and lastly, the funeral pyre was lighted, and, blazing as it did with great intensity, was extinguished in a few minutes. The experiments were in every way successful, and introduced a new agent of the most powerful kind for the saving of property.

I CANNOT say that I am as a rule a believer in pre-sentiments, but the following story, which I heard of the late Mr. Paul Butler, would go far to make me a believer:—A short time before his lamented and sudden death, Mr. Butler purchased a large estate. Upon its being conveyed to him, his son suggested the propriety of his making a fresh will, "as accidents might happen, he might break his neck hunting, or meet with a railway accident." Mr. Butler made a fresh will, and told a friend with whom he was staying that he had done so, repeating, half seriously, half jestingly, his son's reasons for pressing upon him the expediency of doing so—viz., that "he might break his neck." His friend a few days after met him out hunting, and said laughingly, "Well, Butler, glad you have not broken your neck yet." To his horror, before the day was over, he saw Mr. Butler lying on the ground insensible, and on springing from his horse to assist him, found that he had broken his neck!

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—A REVELATION.

"IF you please," said a hard, cold voice.

And Richard Trevor started to find himself face to face with the object of his remark, one which he had uttered aloud.

Trevor stood for a moment, looking round; but they were quite alone, and standing now in the lane where Mr. Mervyn captured Fin Rea in the rugged tree far up the rocky bank.

"You had better return to the house, Mrs. Lloyd," said Trevor, coldly. "I want to speak to you."

"You can speak now, if you please," said the woman, in a low, suppressed voice. "I don't suppose you would like the servants to know."

Trevor was getting angry, and he took a step towards the woman, and held up a finger.

"You have been watching me, Mrs. Lloyd."

"Yes," she said, coolly—"I came on purpose."

"You sent that poor girl here, then, Mrs. Lloyd, and you have been playing the spy?"

"You can call it any hard names you like, Mr. Richard," said the woman, defiantly.

She rolled her white apron round her arms, tightened her lips until they formed a thin livid line, and looked at him without flinching.

Trevor bit his lip to keep down his rising passion, and then went on—

"Mrs. Lloyd," he said, "I thought we had made a truce. Mind, you are the one who breaks it, not I."

The woman laughed mockingly.

"We may as well understand one another," said Trevor; "so speak out. You have been forcing that poor girl, day after day, to throw herself in my way—have you not?"

"Yes."

She nodded her head many times, as she said the word with quite a sharp hiss.

"You wanted me to take a fancy to her?"

"Yes."

"To marry her?"

"Yes."

"And make her the mistress of Penreife?"

"Yes; and I mean to do it."

Trevor stared at her, in wonder at the effrontery displayed.

"And, in your foolish vanity, you thought such a thing possible?"

"Yes."

"Regardless of the poor girl's feelings?"

"Yes—yes—yes!" said Mrs. Lloyd, slowly. "I know what is for her good—and yours."

"Mrs. Lloyd," said Trevor, coldly, "I would gladly keep to my promise with you, that you should never leave Penreife. If harm to your prospects comes of this, don't blame me. You had better go back to the house."

He turned, as if to walk away; but she caught him sharply by the wrist.

"Stop!" she said, angrily. "Tell me this. Have you been trying to make an engagement with that wax doll up at Tolcarne?"

"You insolent old— There, go back, Mrs. Lloyd," he said, checking himself. "You must be mad."

"Mad? Yes, enough to make me, you wild, ungrateful boy," she cried, her fingers tightening round his wrist, so that it would have taken a violent effort to free himself. "Stop, and listen to me."

Trevor looked at her, his anger cooling; for he thought the housekeeper was suffering from mental excitement brought on by the disappointment consequent upon the failure of her plans.

"What do you want to say?" he said, quietly.

"A great deal. Ah, you see, you must listen. Now tell me—that Miss Rea, have you been talking to her father and mother?"

"Yes," said Trevor, thinking it better to humour her till he could get her back to the house.

"Then go and break it all off—at once. Do you hear?—at once."

"And why, pray?" said Trevor, smiling—the position, now that his anger had passed, seeming ridiculous.

"Because you are to marry little Mary, as I wish," said Mrs. Lloyd, in a quick whisper.

"The parties, neither of them being agreed? Come, Mrs. Lloyd, let's get back to the house."

"Richard," cried the woman, shaking his arm—"listen. Do you hear me? How dare you laugh at me like this?"

"Come, Mrs. Lloyd—come, 'nurse, what are you thinking about?" said Trevor, good-humouredly. But he was beginning to fret under the opposition.

"Of your future—of your good, boy. Now, listen to me, Richard. I have long planned this out. I have brought Mary here, educated her, and prepared her for it."

"And now she has fallen in love with Humphrey, and they are going to marry," said Trevor, laughing.

But the smile passed away as he saw the malignant look in the woman's face.

"Humphrey!" she exclaimed, and as she uttered the name she spat upon the ground—"Humphrey shall go. Humphrey shall not stay here. I hate him! His being here is a curse to me."

"Her own son. The woman is crazy," thought Trevor; and he looked anxiously in her eyes.

"Mrs. Lloyd," he began; but she caught him by the other wrist, and her strength in her excitement was prodigious.

"Richard," she exclaimed, "will you mind me—will you do as I wish, and marry Polly?"

"Come to the house, and let's talk about it there, nurse," he said, kindly.

"No—no! here—here! I say you *shall* have her, or, mark me, you shall rue it. There, I know what you think; but I'm as sane as you are—more sane, for you would throw yourself away, and I won't let you."

"Come, Mrs. Lloyd, there must be an end to this. Come to the house."

"Stay where you are, boy," she cried, with her eyes flashing. "Will you obey me?"

"No—no—no," said Trevor, impatiently, and he tried to extricate himself. "Nurse, you are mad."

"Don't call me nurse," she cried, viciously. "Do as I bid you, or I'll make you rue it till your deathbed. But, no, I can't do that. Richard, you shall mind me—you shall obey me in this. I have a right to be minded."

"Mrs. Lloyd, you have gone to the extent of your right, and beyond it; from henceforth you and your

husband must find another home. You shall have a comfortable income, but this cannot go on. There, I cannot leave you in this way—come up to the house.”

He tried to lead her, but she broke away.

“You will have it, then?” she hissed in a hoarse whisper. “Richard, is this the way you treat your mother?”

“My——”

Trevor started back to the extent of their arms, looking at the woman aghast. The fancy that she was distraught had passed away during the last few minutes, and there was such an air of decision and truth in her words and looks that he staggered beneath the shock. The past, her determined action, her opposition to his will—so different to the behaviour of a dependent, and explained at the time on the score of old service—and many little words and looks, notably her passionate embrace on the night of the encounter in the study, all came back to him like a flash, and he could find no words for quite a minute.

“It’s a lie!” he said at last. “Woman, how dare you? My father was too honourable a gentleman ever to descend to a low intrigue with one of his servants.”

“Yes,” said the woman, “and Martha Jane Lloyd was too good a wife to have listened to him if he had.”

“Then,” cried Trevor, in a fury, “how dare you say what you did?”

“Because, my boy, it is the truth. You are my flesh and blood.”

“You are mad!” exclaimed Trevor. “Loose my wrist, woman, or I shall hurt you.”

He looked sharply round, but there was no help at hand; for his first impulse was to tie her wrists, and have her carried to the house. But she prisoned one of his the tighter, by placing her other bony hand a little higher.

“I’m not mad, Richard,” she said, quietly; “and when you hear me, you will see that you must mind me; for, at a word from me, all your riches would be swept away, and you might change places with your bailiff.”

“Humphrey!” ejaculated Richard, his brain in a whirl of doubt. “Tell me—what do you mean?”

“Only this,” said the woman, hoarsely. “That Mrs. Trevor and I had sons almost together. Humphrey and you were the two boys. Do you understand?”

“No,” said Richard, fiercely. “Go on.”

“I got my sister, Dinah Rice, from Caerwmylch to come and be nurse for both, for I was in the house—the maid Jane, as they called me then. Do you want to hear more?”

“Go on,” said Richard, in a hoarse whisper.

“One day I sat thinking. There was death in the house, Richard, and I was wondering about the future—how hard it would be if my fine boy should grow up to poverty through the changes that might take place, and me perhaps sent away by a new mistress. I was jealous, too, of the Trevors’ boy, petted and pampered and waited upon, while my darling had to take his chance. I tell you it made me nearly mad sometimes, for I was ill and weak; and I think the devil came and tempted me, knowing how I was.”

“Go on,” said Richard; for she stopped, and the great drops of sweat were standing on his brow.

“One day, boy, I felt that I could bear it no longer. Dinah had gone down to the kitchen to join the ser-

vants watching the funeral; and I sat thinking, when the Trevors’ baby cried, and no one went. I had you, on my knee, Richard, nursing you, and I went up, innocently enough, to quiet the motherless little bairn, and as I saw it lying alone there in its cradle, my heart yearned over the poor little thing, and I took it in my arms, when it nestled to my breast so pitifully, that I nursed it as I did you, and sat there with you both in my arms.”

Her voice was very husky now; but her words came firmly, and bore the impress of truth.

“It was then, Richard, that the temptation came; for all at once, as I looked down upon you both, the thought came, and I shivered. Then all opened out before me—a bright life, wealth, position, a great future for the helpless babe I held; and I said why should it not be for my boy. I shrank from it for a moment, not more. Then it seemed so easy, so sure, that I did not hesitate. In two minutes you had on the little master’s night gown, and he wore yours; and I laid *you*, Dick—my boy—my flesh and blood, in the cradle, and stole downstairs with theirs.”

There was a faint rustle amongst the leaves overhead; but no one heeded, and the woman went on.

“As soon as I got down, shivering with fear, a sort of hysterical fit came over me, and I got worse; I grew so feverish that I had to lie down, and I was ill for weeks; but that passed off, and the struggle began. Ah, Richard, boy, your poor mother bore it all for you—that you might be rich and happy, while she suffered the tortures of hell; her heart yearning to take you to her heart, hearing you cry as she lay awake at nights with a stranger nursed at her breast. But that passed off when you both grew bigger; and you know how I treated you after, as I saw you grow up. People said I was hard to Humphrey. Perhaps I was, but I was never hard to you; and many a night I’ve cried myself to sleep with joy, when I have found you loving and affectionate, soothing me for the jealous tortures I suffered because I could not call you mine. But I said ‘No, there is no going back; you have made him, let it be.’”

“And Lloyd?” said Richard, hoarsely—“did he know of this?”

“Yes, I told him, and he would have confessed; but he did not dare. My boy, when you spoke to me that night in your room—when for the first time for years I kissed you, I felt that I must tell you all.”

“It’s monstrous!” cried Richard, and his face looked ten years older. “But, no; I won’t believe it—it can’t be true.”

“Not true!” exclaimed Mrs. Lloyd, with her sallown cheeks flushing. “Ask your father. Is it so hard,” she added, bitterly, “to find that you have a father and mother alive instead of in the grave?”

“It is impossible!” cried Richard.

“Hush, hold your tongue!” she said, angrily. “You know the secret now—keep it. What is it to a soul? I never had the heart to send Humphrey away, but treated him well. Send him away now—give him money to go away. He’ll soon forget Polly. You must marry her; and Richard—say a kind word to me,” she whispered, softening, “kiss me once—once only, my boy—your mother—before she goes back to be your servant, and to hold her peace for ever.”

She crept closer to him, as he stood staring straight

away, her thin hands rested on his shoulders, and she gazed up into his eyes, with her face working and growing strangely young, even as his turned old.

"Dick, my darling, handsome son, kiss me—once only. And you'll marry her, won't you, and make her happy? One kiss, my own boy."

She uttered a hoarse cry, for he looked down at her with a look of loathing, and thrust her away.

"Mother? No!" he cried. "I can't call you that. Woman, you thought to bless me, and what you have done comes upon me like a curse. Don't touch me. Don't come near me. Take away your hands. I cannot bear it."

She clung to him; but he tore her hands away, and pushed her from him.

"Dick," she cried, throwing herself on her knees to him, and embracing his knees. "Your mother. One loving word."

"I can't," he gasped—"I can't. It is too much. An impostor—a pretender; and now to be an outcast! My God! what have I done that I should suffer this? Oh, Tiny! My love—my love!"

Those last words seemed torn from his breast in a low, hoarse whisper, as, breaking from the prostrate woman, he rushed away, right into the woods—the undergrowth bending and snapping as he passed on; till, with a groan of despair, he threw himself upon the earth, and lay there, in the deep shade, with his face buried in his hands.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—WITH THE OWNER.

HOW long Richard lay there, he did not know. To him, it seemed like a year of torment, during which, in a wildly fevered state, he went over, again and again, the narrative he had heard; tried to find a flaw in it, but in vain. It was too true—too circumstantial; and at last, in a dazed, heavy way, he raised his haggard face, with his hair roughened, and wrinkled brow, to see Humphrey sitting upon a fallen tree by his side.

"Ah, Humphrey," he said, in a calm, sad voice. "How long have you been there?"

"Ever since, sir," said the young man. "I followed you."

"Then you heard?"

"Every word, sir. I couldn't help it, though. I didn't want to listen."

Richard bowed his head, and remained with his chin upon his breast.

"I had left Polly, sir—God bless her! she'd made me very happy with what she said—and I was taking a short cut back, to try and catch you, sir, when I came upon you sudden like."

"Yes," said Richard, looking him full in the face. "But it was no fault of mine. I thought I was too happy for it to last. But I'll be a man over it. Humphrey," he exclaimed, rousing himself, "they educated me to be a gentleman, and I won't belie them there. Once for all, I am very sorry, and I'll make you every restitution in my power."

"Well, sir, I did wonder why she was always so hard to me; but I don't understand you, sir," said Humphrey, quietly.

"Don't sir me, man," exclaimed Richard, passionately. "Don't be cross with me about it, Master Dick," said Humphrey, smiling; "'taint my fault."

"No, no, my good fellow, I know. Oh, it was monstrous!"

He turned away his head.

"Do you think it's all true, Master Richard," said Humphrey, quietly; "it seems so wild-like."

"True enough. Oh, yes, it's true. But there, we won't talk."

"But I think we'd better, sir."

"Haven't I told you that I'll make you restitution, man—give up all?"

"Master Richard," said Humphrey, with a happy smile on his face, "you've give up to me my little love, and made me feel as if there was nothing else in the world I'd care to have. Look ye here, sir, it's stunned me like; it's hard, you know, to understand. I'm only a poor fellow like, come what may; and if I had the place—oh, you know, it just sounds like so much nonsense!—what could me and Polly do with it, when we could be happier at the lodge? It makes me laugh—it do indeed, sir. You, you see, have been made a scholar, and have your big friends—been made a gentleman, in fact—and nothing would ever make one of me. Let's go on, then, as we are, sir. I'm willing. Only sometimes Polly, maybe, 'll want a new dress, or a ribbon, or something of that kind; and then, if I ask you, you'll give me half a sovereign, or may be a sovereign, eh?"

"Half a sovereign—a sovereign! Why, man, can you not realize that you have from now fifteen thousand a-year?"

"No, sir, that I can't," said Humphrey, smiling pleasantly. "I never was good at figures. Dogs, you know, or horses, or anything in the farming line, I'm pretty tidy at; but figures bothers me. Let things stop as they are, sir; I won't say a word, even to Polly."

"Humphrey," said Richard, holding out his hand, "you always were a good, true, simple-hearted fellow."

"I hope so, sir," said Humphrey, giving his horny palm a rub down his cord breeches before taking the extended hand, "and that's what makes it right that we should go on as we are. Nature knew it, sir, and that's how it was the change come about—you being the clever one, and best suited for the estate. I'm glad of one thing, though."

"What's that?" said Richard, wringing the extended hand.

"Why, I know now, sir, why Mrs. Lloyd was always so down on me—she always was down on me, awful—regular hated me, like. Ah, the times I've cried over it as a boy! Nobody ever seemed to love me like, till now, sir—till now."

Humphrey beamed as he slapped his broad chest; and his simple words seemed to corroborate those of Mrs. Lloyd, till the last ray of hope was crushed from Richard's breast.

"No, Humphrey," he said, gravely, though every word cost him a pang, "I cannot stay here as an impostor. The place is yours, I give up all."

"That you just won't, sir," said Humphrey. "Why, I should be a brute beast if I let you. Come, come, let it go for a day or two, and think it over. It won't trouble me; I don't want it. I'm only glad of one thing—I've got somebody on the hip, and she won't say no, now."

"I want no thinking, Humphrey; and we can still be friends. Come up to the house."

"And what would Miss Tiny say?"

If Humphrey had stabbed him with the iron-pointed staff he carried, he could not have given him greater pain; and his eyes wore a strange, piteous aspect as they gazed upon the young bailiff's face.

"You've got her to think about too, sir," said Humphrey—"same as I have. Oh, no, Master Richard, it wouldn't never do."

"Come up to the house, Humphrey—come up to the house."

And then, without another word, but closely followed by his late servant, Richard strode hastily through the wood, whose briars and twigs in the unaccustomed path seemed now to take the part of fate, and lashed and tore him in his reckless passage, till his face was smeared with blood, which he wiped hastily away.

"Has Mrs. Lloyd come back from her walk?" said Richard to the staring footman.

"Yes, sir, two hours ago," said the man.

"Go into the study, Humphrey Trevor," said Richard, quietly; and then to himself, "Poor woman! and it was done for me."

The Man in the Open Air.

IN our rambles over downs, and through brake and brae, we often find ourselves mentally "wool-gathering," a term applied to a vagrant or idle exercise of the imagination; but we had long thought that it would pay the offspring of our poorer peasantry for the trouble of collecting from the briars the knots of tangled wool which in many districts mat together the more tender shoots of the bramble and blackthorn. Here, thought we, is a grand field open for the utilization of waste products.

The other day, however, we found ourselves at a market dinner in a small town in Suffolk; and, as usual at these gatherings, there was much valuable information, not altogether local, to listen to, as well as a mixture of harmless fun and badinage. One old yeoman, it should be understood, had been the "butt" of the company for years past—a species of water-on-a-duck's-back persecution—which he appeared to receive with equanimity, as it amused others, and did not hurt him. However, on the occasion of our visit, and probably not liking to be "chaffed" before a stranger, Mr. Butt proved himself quite equal to the occasion.

"Did you ever hear what had become of Tony Giles, who wer' the shepherd at Five-bars Farm?" he asked of the leader of his tormentors.

"Wull, he'd been a mighty time at Five-bars," was the reply, "and they 'wanced his wage now and again till he went. I don't know where he be now."

"Wull, I can tell 'ee," said Butt.

"Whur?"

"He be living in a wood hut over by the mere, and is al'ays a picking off the clods o' wool from the bushes and gate staunches."

"Wull, that's a funny way of life!"

"Yes; but what do yer think he's made by it—put by?"

"He's been at it some eight year?"

Here a nod from Mr. Butt.

"Wull, then—ten pound."

"Guess again"—from Mr. Butt.

"Fifty—a hundred. Why, you don't mean more! Wull, a couple of hundred."

"No," observed the Butt, rising to leave the room—"not a farden, and sarve him right."

The general laugh which followed this, and more particularly as the "sell" came from one never before suspected of "having it in him," could not have been very pleasing to the hitherto leader of the force. However, from that day, we are told that Butt has been exalted at the market dinner, and his persecutor deposed—a close reflection of larger societies and nations.

What led us to this anecdote? Oh, wool-gathering, which we thus learn is far from profitable. How may it be with the quantities of feathers one sees flying here and there on a common upon which geese much do congregate? Surely here at least there is something to be made as well as gathered. We are told that, notwithstanding the large supplies brought out in France, the price of the new "artificial down" is reported to be rising steadily as its value becomes known. It is prepared by shearing the barbs or soft parts from feathers. Any kind of feathers will answer, and when cut from the quills, the material is readily "felted" into a strong and beautiful fabric. What is alone wanted is a machine for stripping the quills with speed and economy. Cutting the barbs by hand would not pay even in France, were it not for the high price offered for the raw down.

While upon the utilizing of hitherto waste materials, it may be stated that the leaves of the pineapple now form the staple of a coarse kind of wadding available in upholstery, and in making a heavy fabric resembling flannel.

We were listening to the prattle of some servant girls out for their Sunday walk in a mossy-banked lane in Surrey.

"Those," said one of them, pointing to some primroses—"those we dig up in our country, and plant them in our gardens with their roots upwards, and they grow into polyanthus."

This folk-lore is certainly very curious and enduring, and to meddle with it is to touch a most sacred belief. Barnacles still turn to geese in some localities, and but the other day we heard a tolerably educated man affirm that if you put a hair into a tumbler of water, in a few minutes it would assume the attributes of animated life.

IN the descriptive catalogue of pictures by Gustave Doré, on exhibition at the Gallery in New Bond-street, allusion is made to the persecution of the Christian martyrs by Diocletian, in this wise:—"Sometimes thirty and oftentimes threescore, and oftentimes a hundred in one day, of men, women, and children were slain by divers kinds of deaths, amongst others by throwing them into the Coliseum to such kinds of wild beasts as would devour them—as lions, bears, leopards, and wild bulls." Well, "live and learn" is an old proverb, and we thank the writer for the scrap of information; but does he really wish us to take it *au sérieux*, or is he poking fun at us? If so, he might have added, in the words of the late genial Artemus Ward, "This is a goak."

Preparing for the Academy.

THE pictures which have been on view at the various studios of our known artists seem to promise that this year's Academy exhibition, for which they are intended, shall at any rate not fall below the yearly average of merit.

Mr. Rivière sends in three pictures, two of which are vivid representations of animal life. In one, two young lions are depicted, in an early morning scene, prowling in search of prey, their bushy manes, and the strong development of muscle and sinew, being represented with admirable correctness. In the next picture, a large white duck is shown, dashing along a brook, with a captive frog in his beak, and followed by a bright-coloured Rouen gander, and several other ducks, all of whom evidently grudge their companion his prize, and are ready to seize it from his grasp, should they succeed in overtaking him. All the details of this picture are as excellent as the conception of the whole. The third contribution from this artist is a scene from the "Odyssey"; but even in this poetical subject, the appearance of Minerva to Ulysses, Mr. Rivière has made the strong point to consist in the portraying of the terrified attitudes of several great dogs, which shrink cowering before the goddess whose divinity they instinctively recognize.

Mr. Williams sends in "The Ancestor in the Tapestry"—a scene in the interior of a Spanish house, where a steward in the dress of the last century calls the attention of the heir to the representation of his ancestor, who is depicted in the tapestry doing wonderful feats of arms against an array of Turkish enemies, while his mother—dignified, handsome, and proud of her son—looks on at the pair, attended by a young female.

"Motherless" is the title of the picture sent in by Mr. Fildes, who, after his vigorous painting of the exterior of a casual ward, somewhat disappointed us last year by giving us only a single figure, admirable as that might be in its way. The subject of the present picture is a labourer, who has evidently just returned from his day's work, nursing his dying child, and watching with intense anxiety the features of the little sufferer, while he holds one wasted hand to his lips. Four younger children are grouped about the cottage; while an elder girl looks on with tearful eyes, evidently sharing in her widowed father's distress. The picture is full of pathos, which is even heightened by glimpses of outside brightness obtained through door and window.

A thorough appreciation of a humorous situation, and delicacy in expressing it on canvas, are shown by Mr. Yeames in his picture, "The Last Little Bit of Scandal," which represents the meeting of a lady and an old gentleman in the street during the time when sedan chairs were in vogue. The friends have stopped their chairs for a few minutes' gossip. The execution of this throughout is excellent, not the least effective portion being the countenance of the lady's black page. Mr. Yeames also contributes some scenes in Venice and other Italian cities; and also a painting of a handsome Italian girl standing at a water vessel in a courtyard.

In landscapes, we have Mr. McWhinter's "The Spendrift," and "The Lady of the Forest." The former of these is a view on the seashore, with all the mi-

nutæ of pebbles, seaweed, &c.; while a rough cart laden with seaweed, glistening from the salt water, toils heavily on in face of the spray from the sea. The latter picture, "The Lady of the Forest," represents a handsome birch tree, with graceful, fountain-like foliage falling from the upper boughs.

Mr. Calderon sends several pictures of different scenes in the old-fashioned French town of Arles, supposed to be noted for the grace and beauty of the female portion of its inhabitants. One of the pictures represents two pretty young girls, evidently the belles of the place, meeting a priest, whose face is hidden from us, and bowing to him with an air of great respect. The idea and its graceful execution are alike excellent.

A humorous picture of animal life has been given us by Mr. Hodgson, whose scenes in Algiers are well known—the locality chosen this year being still Northern Africa, near Tunis. An Arab, who has been engaged in ploughing, is standing on a hillside, and behind him, quarrelling over the numbers of red worms turned up by the ploughshare, are a quantity of red-billed storks, strutting about, and shaking out their wings, with a ridiculous affectation of dignity.

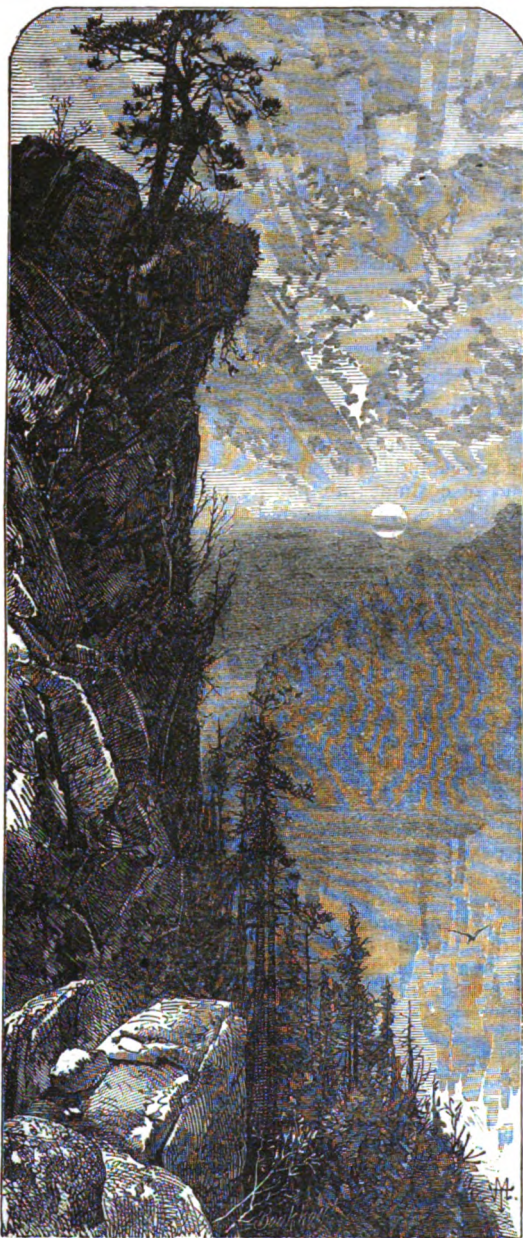
Mr. H. S. Marks sends a picture of the "Apothecary in 'Romeo and Juliet'" pouring out the poison for Romeo, who is seen impatiently waiting its preparation. The old man stands in his little room, dressed in a monkish kind of costume; and, as he pours the potion into a small bottle, we see the red sparkle of the fluid. The table by which he stands bears a number of jars and bottles of different shapes, as well as a jug of rosemary; while at its foot are some skins of animals, and on the wall near are seen some diagrams, a skeleton hand and arm, and the portrait of the apothecary's wife. A stuffed alligator and some thorny fish hang by cords from the ceiling, while in the window are suspended a bladder full of seeds, some herbs, and wild flowers. On one side is a bookshelf, with three only remaining books, and by it part of a retort; and on the floor are scattered various utensils connected with the old man's occupation.

PAPER MANUFACTORIES.—A contemporary states that there are 3,000 paper manufactories in the world, employing 80,000 men and 180,000 women, besides the 100,000 employed in the rag trade; 1,800,000,000 pounds of paper are produced annually. One-half is used in printing, a sixth in writing, and the remainder for packing and other purposes. The United States average 17 pounds per head; an Englishman consumes 11½ pounds; a German, 8 pounds; a Frenchman, 7 pounds; an Italian, 3½ pounds; a Spaniard, 1½ pound; and a Russian only 1 pound annually, on an average.

ONE of the curates belonging to a large and poor parish entered the house of an aged couple, and found the "gudewife" in a very exhausted condition from pain and disease. In the hope of alleviating her suffering, he quickly procured some brandy, saying that it was purchased from the offertory alms. A day or two afterwards he went again to see the old people, when the poor woman made the following statement: "That brandy, sir, did me a power o' good, and a kind gentleman sent me some money, so my old man went ever so far to find the Offertory Arms, to get me some more. He couldn't find out where it was, but he found the Bedford Arms, and the brandy is just as good."

The Ex-Slave States.

MESSRS. Blackie and Son have lately issued a handsome volume purporting to be a record of journeys made by Mr. Edward King through the



southern portion of the United States during the years 1873 and 1874.* The modest title of the work, though,

* "The Southern States of North America." By Edward King.—Blackie and Son.

gives a totally inadequate idea of the nature of its contents; for in it we have not only a vivid description of those parts of the country which are little frequented by strangers, and which, therefore, have a special interest to Europeans, but a full account of the industries, trade, &c., of the principal well-known cities and towns, as well as the author's impressions of the social and political condition of the various classes of inhabitants. Several chapters are devoted to Louisiana. We take a few passages from the description of the French quarter of New Orleans:—

"A walk into the French section enchants you. The characteristics of an American city vanish; this might be Toulouse, or Bordeaux, or Marseilles. The houses are all of stone, or brick stuccoed or painted; the windows of each storey descend to the floors, opening like doors upon very pretty balconies, protected by iron railings; quaint dormer windows peer from the great roofs; the street doors are massive, and large enough to admit carriages into the stone-paved courtyards, from which stairways communicate with the upper apartments.

"Sometimes, through a portal opened by a slender, dark-haired, bright-eyed Creole girl in black, you catch a glimpse of a garden, delicious with daintiest blossoms, purple and red and white, gleaming from vines clambering along a grey wall; rose bushes, with the grass about them strewn with petals; bosquets, green and symmetrical; luxuriant hedges, arbours and refuges, trimmed by skilful hands; banks of verbenas; bewitching profusion of peach and apple blossoms; the dark green of the magnolia; in a quiet corner, the rich glow of the orange in its nest among the thick leaves of its parent tree; the palmetto, the catalpa—a mass of bloom which laps the senses in slumbrous delight. Suddenly the door closes, and the paradise is lost, while Eve remains inside the gate!"

The different industries of Louisiana are fully entered upon—notably, the production of cotton, rice, and sugar—as well as its political standing. Indeed, these particulars are given most fully in relation to the fifteen ex-slave states treated of in the volume. Speaking of orange culture in Florida, the author says:—

"In the Indian river region, the woods along the banks are, according to one account, 'great gardens of the sour wild orange, and we often,' says the traveller, 'had to clear the ground of rare quantities of the fruit before we could pitch our tents.' These wild trees can be set out in new lands, and at a proper time budded with the sweet orange. Any time during the winter months is proper for transplanting. The 'buds,' or grafts, grow enormously the first year; and in five years at most, if one hundred transplanted trees have been set out on an acre, that acre will yield 10,000 oranges; next year the yield will be doubled, and in ten years from the date of transplanting, with anything like reasonable success, one is sure of an income for life. For the orange is a hardy tree, gives a sure crop, has few insect enemies, and lives for more than a hundred years. A good tree will bear from 1,000 to 3,000 oranges yearly." The author explains that one advantage possessed by the producer of the luscious fruit is the small amount of labour required, the services of one man being sufficient to pick and prepare for market the produce of about 200 trees.

The cotton planter, on the other hand, is assailed by

innumerable troubles connected with negro labour—one being the difficulty of keeping the hands well to their work, for they are almost invariably lazy in the extreme; while besides this they are given to stealing the cotton during picking time in small quantities, which, having thus accumulated a little stock, they take to the nearest city, and dispose of to a “fence,” or receiver of stolen goods. As to the appearance presented by a cotton plantation, we quote the following:—

“Nothing can be more beautiful than the appearance of a cotton field extending over many hundreds of acres, when the snowy globes of wool are ready for

The book is profusely illustrated with excellent cuts, many of them being charming little sketches of scenery. One, which we give, is a representation of the Grand Chasm, that name being given to the end of a ravine in Northern Georgia, through which runs the western branch of the Tugaloo River. The Grand Chasm is described as having “rounded battlements, which, sloping and yielding, end in a rugged hillside, strewn with boulders, with blackened hemlocks, and with tree trunks prone, as if waiting for some landslide to hurl them into the stream.”

The second illustration which we give from the work



RAILWAY STATION AT GORDONSVILLE, VIRGINIA.

picking, and the swart labourers, with sacks suspended from their shoulders, wander between the rows of plants, culling the fleeces. The cotton plant is beautiful from the moment when the minute leaflets appear above the moist earth until the time when it is gathered in. In June, when it is in bloom, and when the blossoms change their colour day by day, a cotton plantation looks like an immense flower garden. In the morning, the blooms of upland cotton are often of a pale straw colour; at noon, of a pure white; in the afternoon, perhaps, faint pink; and the next morning perfect pink.”

represents a railway station at Gordonsville, in Virginia. A train is stopping, and “the negroes, who swarm day and night about the trains, look with amazement upon the brisk, rosy young men and women who throng the cars.”

There are some striking pictures of wild scenery in Virginia, from which we select the following:—

“The country near the junction of the Guenbrier with the New River literally stands on end. The people live on hill-slopes so steep that the horses can hardly keep their footing; and it is sometimes said that the farmers in the cañon stand on one bank and shoot

their corn seed into the field on the other from a rifle.

"The New River cañon is one of the most remarkable natural wonders of the eastern portion of the United States. It is a deep crack in the earth, a hundred miles long, a mile wide at the summit, from eight to fifteen hundred feet deep, and traversed at its bottom by a turbulent stream. The railroad builders found this cañon practicable for the passage of their route. They blasted out fragments of rock until they had made a shelf along the perpendicular rocky side of the cañon. Entering this strange gorge by train, one scarcely realizes that he is hundreds of feet below the level of the surrounding country. The scenery is grand. The journey along the rocky shelf, where one can look upon the enormous masses of stone hurled down to make room for the track, or look up to the streams of water flowing from the sides of the cliffs, is an experience never to be forgotten.

"But there is one remarkable characteristic of the cañon which the traveller through it, by rail or in batteau, will notice with care. He will observe that the stratification of the rocks is very singular; that there has been no upheaval, no disorganization. The earth has simply been cracked asunder, and the traveller is able to enter, without difficulty, a coal shaft, which is open to the sunlight, and through which a railroad runs."

With respect to the negroes in the Louisiana cotton plantations, Mr. King says:—

"The thing which struck me as most astonishing here in the cotton lands, as on the rice plantations of South Carolina, was, the absolute subjection of the negro. Those with whom I talked would not directly express any idea. They gave a shuffling and grimacing assent to whatever was suggested, or, if they dissented, would beg to be excused from dissenting verbally, and seemed to be much distressed at being required to express their opinions openly. . . . While the planter gave me the fullest and freest account of the social status of the negroes employed by him, he failed to mention any sign of a definite and intellectual growth. The only really encouraging sign in their social life was the tendency to create for themselves homes, and now and then to cultivate the land about them."

Yet, in spite of all that can be said against the negro, Mr. King seems to believe fully in the ultimate rise of the race through education and civilization. He says:—

"It has been the fashion in both north and south to believe that the negro would prove susceptible of cultivation only to a certain point; but the universal testimony of the mass of careful observers is that the negro can go as far in mental processes as the white child. The blacks have wonderful memories and strong imitative propensities; eloquence, passionate and natural; a strange and subtle sense of rhythm and poetry; and it is now pretty well settled that there are no special rare limitations. Why, then, should they not go forward to a good future?"

There are some interesting chapters relating to the religion and religious services of the negroes; and we may fairly say that Mr. King has produced a work which is equally valuable as a volume of interesting reading, or as a permanent book of reference.

Sketches of the Central Wilds.

BY A WALKING WALLABY.

XI.—AFTER THE FLOOD.

THERE was a long and weary time of waiting now, until the waters subsided, when the desolation was something awful, bringing to the watcher's mind the scene that must have presented itself to old Noah when he opened the window in the side of his ark to let fly the bird that should return no more. At first, nothing to be seen but muddy, leaf-stripped trees, growing, as it were, taller hour by hour; then the muddy tops of irregular islands, with rushing streams hurrying between them in all directions; then plains made their appearance, studded with lakes and ponds, with a wondrous evaporation going on beneath the sun; then there was a vast land of deep mud, through which travelling was impossible; and last of all a dry, cracked and veined plain—elastic, soft in places beneath the feet, where the crusted alluvial mud was too thin to bear the traveller's weight.

Harry reached the Gully with his men, after an arduous journey, to find it entirely altered in appearance—fine rich soil swept away, and in its place bare rock, covered here and there with sand and gravel. Trees washed away, banks literally cut down, the improvements made with long and painful labour all gone. A few posts stood, covered with mud, to show where the hut had been; but hurdles, planks, drays, everything portable, was gone; and, worn out and dejected, Harry sat down to look around him at the ruin, while his men prepared some of the everlasting tea and damper.

"Don't be down-hearted, sir," said Joe. "It's a bad look-out, certainly; but then, you know, it might have been worse."

"Worse!" said Harry, dolefully.

And then he leaned his head upon his hand, not noticing that Jerry was squatted down beside him, very happy and contented, for he had lost nothing by the flood.

"Plenty grass and water now," said Jerry at last. "Plenty water kedge fis' and drink horse."

"No horses to drink it, Jerry," said his master, sadly.

"Wait bit; Jerry had damper, Jerry find plenty horse, sheep, and bullockies."

Harry took but little notice of the black's remark at the time, but he was reminded of it by Joe that night, before they lay down to sleep in the driest spot they could find—not a very difficult task as far as the surface went, since the sun rapidly dried up the superabundant moisture; and now, so few days after the subsiding of the waters, a faint green tint was already beginning to show itself, ready to spread a verdant veil over the desolated earth, and to turn it once more into a smiling pasture.

"Jerry thinks he could find some of the beasts alive, after all, sir," said Joe.

"How—where?" said Harry, incredulously.

"High grounds and ridges, sir," said Joe. "There may be some, you know, of the poor brutes had sense enough to climb higher and higher as the waters rose."

Jerry proved right; for the next day, after a long, weary tramp, he struck the trail of cattle, though to whom they had belonged remained to be proved. One

thing, however, was certain—some stock had survived the flood in this part, and the next day was fixed upon to follow the footprints.

"Not that it seems of much use," said Harry. "How are we to feed the poor brutes if we recover any?"

"Feed 'em, sir?" exclaimed Joe. "You don't know this here country yet. There's no ill here without its good. Didn't you see the first green sprouts showing to-day above the steamy mud?"

Harry nodded.

"Then, before you can a'most say Jack Robinson, sir, all that will be richer pasture than you've ever had before. That there grass as comes up will be rich fat to clothe the ribs of all your beasts and sheep, and you'll do more in a year now than you did in two before. Hold up, sir, and go at it again. Only let us find some of the stock alive after this plaguy dose of fire and water, and then see what we'll do, if the blacks will only let us."

Harry did not know the country, but he was in that state that if his shepherd had prognosticated nothing but evil he would have given up at once, while, as he now prophesied nothing but good, he roused up, and rose the next morning mentally girt of loins for a new struggle with fate.

Harry had still in reserve a sufficiency of funds to once more find himself in necessities; but it was with far from sanguine feelings that, after his long journey to and from the nearest post where he could obtain the goods needful, he returned to the settlement at Gurra Gully.

But he had now one advantage—namely, experience to back him; and though his dray loads were smaller and less in number, in many instances he now possessed valuable necessities, where before he had only burdened himself with articles unsuited to the station.

Matters turned out far better at the Gully than he anticipated. Certainly, he had looked upon everything as irretrievably gone, while search and accident kept turning up valuables from amongst the mud, such as guns, pistols, and various iron utensils, one and all damaged, but still not irretrievably so.

As for Jerry, he proved himself a treasure—hunting out cattle, horses, and sheep for a fresh start in life, and sufficient, too, to form the nucleus of fresh flocks and herds.

Things looked brighter once more; and at work night and day, with nature doing her best to obliterate the damage she had done, Harry's spirits were gradually rising, so that he had begun to hope once more for wealth, when he received another damp in the news from England of his mother's death—news which seemed to fall heavily in his isolated condition, far away from all who could sympathize and condole; and with the old pleasant memories of boyhood strong upon him, he blamed what he termed his selfish love, for leading him these thousands of miles away from her bedside.

But in busy life young men find little leisure for mourning; and time sped on, with Harry Clayton fighting boldly against his difficulties, now making head and saving money fast, so as just to accumulate a sufficiency to meet the losses which afterwards befel him. For in the part he had chosen it was, to use the old shepherd's words, "Either one thing or t'other—sugar to-day, bitter aloes to-morrer." Now the pasturage would be

abundant, then there would be only brown dried grass and muddy water holes. He certainly did not again have to encounter a flood of so fierce a kind; but it seemed here as if everything was on a grand scale—if Nature was prolific, she was most abundantly so; if sterile, to utter barrenness. The storms were such as he had never before encountered; and on summing up his experience, Harry was obliged to own that, in spite of seasons of abundance, the failures thoroughly balanced them, and on the whole he made no progress, but, on the contrary, gradually fell back, till he felt that he must eventually look failure in the face, and calculate upon some means of retrieving his fortunes.

It was not for want of industry. Daybreak had always seen Harry Clayton ready to leave his rough bed and work at the same rough toil as his men. He was always ready to take his share—sheep-washing, dressing, or shearing; bullock-driving—no matter what; feeling, as he did, that it was the surest road to success.

But there were too many obstacles in that road to success; and no matter how he tried to pass them, it was not to be. He had a run of prosperity, and then came a disease among his beasts; then the flocks that he had arduously got together again caught the scab, and died off faster and faster, till not a tithe were left. It almost seemed as if some mighty adverse power were fighting against him and nullifying his every effort, and he would go to his rest by night hopeless and despairing. But sleep brought with it balm, as well as strength, mental and bodily; and with the early morning he would bend to his burden once more, fighting still uphill, till nightfall should leave him again low-spirited and dull.

"There is always something wrong," exclaimed Harry.

Jerry would turn tired of civilization and daily labour just when he was most wanted. A whole drove of bullocks would stray off, leaving nothing but their faint track upon some stony ground, where the eyes of a black could alone detect them; and at such a time Jerry would be an absentee, vanishing without giving the slightest intimation of his intentions. It was vexatious, but unavoidable, and many a long, fruitless ride would be the result. Old Joe was able, and could track pretty well; but he always declared the blacks to be unapproachable in that respect, and more often than not his attempts to ride down the stragglers would prove unavailing.

Harry lost heavily in this way; for being on the very outskirts of civilization, with black enemies in plenty, there was no chance of a friendly hand driving his bullocks back; for, as a rule, they always strayed off by the way that led them into the pathless wilderness, where the spears of the blacks were ever ready to slay or drive the poor beasts frantic.

"As I've often said before, if them there floods would only drown out the whole of the unfriendly tribes, there'd be some use in 'em," grumbled Joe; "instead of ruining and upsetting our work, and letting a parcel of vagabonds, too black even to show the dirt on their skins, come and drive our bullocks astray; they don't stray, they're drove, that's what they are. What's the good of savages, that's what I want to know?"

But then Joe was no philosopher, and only spoke in

that way when returning wearied out after a long hunt after some missing bullocks.

"They're such an out-an'-out bad lot," he would say, "and don't get no better. Lazy, dirty, and everything but what they should be. You never see a black taking care for to-morrow—only busy filling himself so full to-day that he'll last over. Clever chaps, in their way, too, tracking and hunting out 'possum. Wonder how they came to think of them boomerangs of theirs? It must have been some wonderful lazy chap that invented it, and who didn't like the trouble of going to fetch his weppin after he'd throwed it."

Harry held long consultations with Joe, perhaps following out his suggestions a little too readily; but the old convict had proved himself a faithful friend in many adversities, and he would have as soon thought of giving up his life as leaving his young master.

In all farming matters a man can do much—he can make certain preparations; and had Harry depended solely upon self, it is probable that he would have been no forwarder than he was through depending upon the old shepherd. But though with their conjoined experience they could guard against such and such things, there was a great deal resting upon the seasons—seasons that there was no trusting in; and at last, thoroughly disheartened to an extent that no buoyancy of spirit could rouse him from, Harry was continually asking himself one question—poor, beggarly, and helpless, should he stay there in the wilds from day to day, or go home?

The seasons he would have braved; but then there were the blacks, never giving him rest. The blacks he would have fought with; but then there were the seasons—diseases, troubles innumerable that he had fought almost single-handed one by one. His burden grew heavier and heavier day by day; for it seemed that another stone was being added constantly, while his fortitude grew less. He could hope still, but he saw that his hopes were vain—that he was contending against difficulties that it would take a score of years and hundreds more settlers to eradicate, while his single-handed efforts were fruitless, and but like to the labour of Sisyphus.

And so came now, again and again, to Harry's mind the same question. The pride and determination to be rich were gone now, beaten out of him; the change of position that brought change of sentiment had come, and as the same question presented itself again and again, it was to willing ears, and he repeated it always to himself, "Should he go home?"

In an account of Napoleon the Great's Russian campaign a historian relates: "The Russians were massed upon a frozen swamp. Napoleon pointed his artillery at them, and twenty thousand bit the dust!"

SOMETHING like an Encyclopædia is possessed by the Chinese, consisting of 160,000 volumes, called *Sek-koo-tswen-choo*. This truly colossal work was first conceived by the Emperor Kien Long—very appropriate name, Long—who, in 1773, entrusted a committee of *savants* with its compilation. At the present moment, 78,740 volumes of the work have already been published. Of these, 7,353 tomes are devoted to theology, 2,127 treat of classics and of music, history absorbs 21,626; while the remainder, 47,604, comprise philosophical and scientific matter.

From First to Last; or, Gwendoleen's Engagement.

CHAPTER VI.

IN vain I tried to keep aloof. Mr. Ramsay was perpetually sending for me on some pretext, and actually contrived to have me retained for a lawsuit he was engaged in. One afternoon I called to see him by appointment, and was shown into the library, where Gwen was writing. She looked paler even than usual, and terribly harassed, but her face brightened as I entered.

"I am so glad it is you," she exclaimed, as she held out her hand. "Oh, Mr. Fairfax, I have had such a letter from Florance this morning. He is so angry that I have never been down to Croydon to see him. As if I could! Uncle would never hear of such a thing; and—"

"And you do not desire," I added, quietly.

"No, I do not," she replied, unhesitatingly. "Read this letter yourself, Mr. Fairfax, and tell me if you think any reasonable being would have written it."

And she placed it in my hands.

"No, Miss Ramsay, I cannot do that," I said, returning it to her. "When Harford wrote this letter, he never meant any eyes but yours to read it. You have no right to show it to me."

I spoke sternly, but I pitied her from the bottom of my heart. The tears sprang to her lovely eyes.

"I see you are displeased with me. You think him right and me wrong."

"No, I do not. I think you are both wrong, but I pity him more than you; for he is weaker, and less able to bear trouble and disappointment. You must learn to bear with him. You knew his disposition when you engaged yourself to him."

"But he was different then—he was, indeed. He was not the morbid, irritable creature he is now."

"No, because he was happier. He can't bear reverses."

"But he can't expect to go through life without them; and if he gives way whenever anything goes wrong, he will drive me mad. If I could only have foreseen the turn affairs would take, I would have borne anything rather than have engaged myself to him. If I might only go on living with uncle, as I am doing now, I could be so happy."

"And does Florance know the feelings with which you regard him?" I asked.

"Yes, and he threatens to destroy himself if I break off the engagement; and I believe he would."

I believed so too. His mind was ill-regulated enough for anything.

"But when you were first engaged to him—"

"He knew that I only accepted him at all because I was so wretched at home, and because I thought less badly of him than of the other men by whom I was surrounded, and I did not actually dislike him; and he said he should be content with that."

And I recalled all the falsehoods he had told me about Gwendoleen being so madly in love with him.

"I do not think I should ever have found him as—as contemptible as I do now, had I never met you or uncle, and learnt to contrast him with—"

"Hush, Miss Ramsay," I interrupted her, fiercely. "You must not speak like that. You acted very

wrongly, in the first place, in accepting a man you could not love. Remember that he, too, has something to forgive—"

"Sorry to have kept you waiting, Fairfax."

And Mr. Ramsay rushed in, very much annoyed at his own want of punctuality.

Gwendoleen fled precipitately.

"Tell you what it is, Fairfax," said Mr. Ramsay, when we had discussed our business—"don't think that little girl is very happy—eh? Don't believe she cares a straw for that young fellow she is engaged to. Wish I could see any way of getting her out of it."

"It would be very unfair towards Harford."

"Not at all—much more unfair to saddle him with a wife who doesn't care for him."

"So I should say about the majority of men. I know I should think so if it were my case; but Harford is an exception to the rule. I really do believe he'd commit suicide if Miss Ramsay broke off the engagement."

"Well, then, let him. A man who could commit such an act of folly does not deserve to live. What does he suppose he was sent into the world for? To whine away his life about a girl who does not care a fig for him, or to do good to his fellow-creatures?"

"Harford will never do any great good to anybody; the utmost we can hope for him is to pass through life creditably, and without making himself utterly miserable and ridiculous."

"Young idiot! I have no patience with such fools. I wish Gwen would break off the engagement. I see you don't."

I turned scarlet; and felt furious with myself the next moment for having done so, for I saw the old man's eyes fixed upon me.

"I always think it a bad precedent," I said, "for people to fancy they may make and break engagements easily. A promise should never be given rashly, nor broken without very good cause."

"Yes; but when there is very good cause. You surely would not hold a girl to an engagement that had become hateful to her?"

"Certainly not; but I cannot lay down rules for others. Every man must obey the law of his own conscience."

"I wish to heavens it had been you," said Mr. Ramsay, as he shook hands with me at parting.

"You are very kind," I replied, briefly—almost haughtily; and rushed out of the house, resolving that I would not go there again. It was torture, it was madness. I was tampering with honour, with happiness, with all that I held precious. I felt certain Gwen cared for me. Harford would have every right to despise me for the part I had acted towards him.

After that day, I passed every spare hour at Croydon with the invalid. That was my self-imposed penance. I would try, I thought, and atone in this way for the wrong I had unintentionally done him; and I am bound to confess that Florance contrived to render these visits as disagreeable as possible to me. I was sure he suspected something—he was naturally jealous and suspicious—for he was always asking me when I had last seen Gwendoleen, and when I was likely to see her again, and various other questions that it was sometimes almost impossible to answer. It was difficult to know how to manage him. If I talked about

Gwen, he was jealous; if I was silent about her, it roused his suspicions. I often wondered how I could ever have made a friend of such an unreasonable creature. Had I changed, or had he?

I must not omit to mention here that Mr. Ramsay had heard from his sister-in-law.

"She washed her hands of her daughter altogether," she said.

"It is the first business, then, that she has ever come out of with clean hands," grumbled old Ramsay, who was very partial to a grim joke.

And so it was settled that Gwendoleen was to be married from her uncle's house; but he would not hear of a date being fixed until he had had a personal interview with Harford. As soon as Florance was able to be moved, he was brought up to town, and I took lodgings for him in Weymouth-street, that he might be near the Ramsays. I dreaded his first interview with his *fiancée*; but it passed off better than I had expected, owing to Mr. Ramsay's being present, so that Harford could not grumble about Gwendoleen's undemonstrativeness, which was a fruitful source of complaint. From the day of her lover's arrival, Gwendoleen looked paler and sadder than ever. It went to my heart to see how rapidly she altered. Instead of her usual calm, dignified demeanour, there was a fretful, careworn expression on her face that I could not bear to see. I kept away from the house as much as possible.

One afternoon, about three weeks before the wedding was fixed to take place, Mr. Ramsay sent to speak to me on business. He was not able to call at my chambers during the day, and he wished me to meet him at his own house at half-past five. I was there at the hour named, and this time found him waiting for me. I was nearly an hour in the library with him, and when I rose to take leave, he begged me to stay to dinner. I hesitated, but he would take no denial.

"Go up into the drawing-room, and you'll find Harford and Gwen there. I don't intrude much upon their happiness," and he made a wry face. "A very little of that young gentleman's society goes a long way with me."

I walked upstairs, my footsteps scarcely audible on the thick pile carpet. Before I reached the door, I overheard Gwendoleen saying, in a weary voice,—

"But you knew that, Florance—you knew that perfectly well when I promised to marry you."

"Yes, but you promised to try and care for me."

"Well, Florance, what have I done to annoy you now? I try to please you in every possible way. If I have unwittingly offended you, I am very sorry. I cannot say more."

"I believe you care for somebody else."

"Florance!"—the tone was no longer weary, but indignant—"take care how you say such things to me—"

"May I come in?" I asked, trying to look unconscious as I entered; but I am afraid it was a sorry attempt.

Harford threw himself sulkily into an arm-chair, and took up a book.

"Do you like this portrait of uncle, Mr. Fairfax?" said Gwen. "It is his wedding present to me—or rather, one of his presents, for I am ashamed to think of all the gifts he has lavished upon me lately."

"The most precious gifts are those which cannot be bought," said Harford, sententiously.

"Good temper, for instance," retorted Gwendoleen. Harford flung down his book, and rushed out of the room.

She turned to me.

"Oh, Mr. Fairfax, don't begin to scold me now. I can't bear it—indeed I can't. You don't know what I have had to put up with from him to-day."

"Scold you, my poor child! I pity you with all my heart. I only wish I could help you in any way; but the best advice I can give you is what I have often told you before. Learn to bear and forbear, and believe there is something better, even in this world, than mere happiness.

"Life does not count by hours nor days,
But just by duties done."

She burst into tears. I drew her gently towards me, till her head rested on my shoulder, and my lips almost touched her smooth white brow.

"Oh, George!" she moaned, "if only—"

"Hush, hush!" I whispered, softly. "It is no use thinking of what might have been; it is more than useless—it is wrong. We must try and make the best of what is, and perhaps it will turn out better than we expect."

Just then I fancied I heard footsteps passing, and I released her quickly.

"It was only my maid," she said. "She always goes up to my room at this hour; and I ought to be going up to dress now."

I did not seek to detain her. I was only too glad to be alone. I needed solitude to collect my thoughts. I felt mad with Harford for his folly. He was alienating the little liking Gwendoleen had ever felt for him. He was a cowardly, contemptible fool, to treat a woman in that way; and I had a good mind to tell him so. And what reply might he not make to me? That I was a false, treacherous friend. But was Gwendoleen really bound to him? I argued. Was she not sacrificing herself to a chimera of honour? It was not as if he were a kind, devoted lover; he was, on the contrary, jealous and capricious. She would be miserable with him; and had I not felt very guilty in caring for her so much myself, I should have advised her breaking off the engagement at once. Gwendoleen had not left the room many minutes before Mr. Ramsay came in. He looked at me very fixedly, I thought, as he asked—

"What have you done with the happy couple?"

"Miss Ramsay has gone to dress," I replied.

"Then I suppose it was Harford who rushed out of the house so frantically about ten minutes ago, just before I went upstairs?"

I am afraid I looked rather confused. Then it was he who had gone upstairs ten minutes ago, and not the maid. I thought it did not sound like a woman's tread. How much or how little had he heard in passing?

"And they have left you to your own devices all this time, eh? You had better come to my room and wash your hands."

I acquiesced readily, only too glad of anything to make a diversion.

Seven o'clock came, but no Florance appeared. We sat down to dinner without him, for Mr. Ramsay never waited for any one. Gwendoleen looked pale and ab-

sent; and I, in spite of my best efforts, I am aware, did not appear quite the same as usual; for I saw Mr. Ramsay glance from one to the other in a sharp, suspicious manner. The soup was taken away, and the fish put on the table; but still no Florance made his appearance. When Gwendoleen left the room, Mr. Ramsay turned to me—

"What on earth does all this mean, Fairfax?"

I could not say with truth that I was at a loss to explain, so I merely replied that I fancied Harford was put out about something.

"Put out! But I call it a great piece of impertinence, his daring to behave like this to me. If he does not choose to dine here, he should send round and say so. I'll just show him I'm not going to tolerate this sort of thing."

"It won't be for long, sir."

"It may be for a great deal longer than he bargains for. I am not going to have Gwen sacrificed to an ill-tempered, ill-conditioned fellow. I'll give him a bit of my mind to-morrow."

Gwendoleen had retired to her own room when we went upstairs, and the maid came down shortly afterwards with a message to say Miss Ramsay had a bad headache, and had gone to bed.

Her poor old uncle looked terribly distressed. His lovely niece had grown very dear to him, and he could not bear to see her sad or suffering.

"All that scoundrel's fault," I heard him mutter.

He and I passed a dull evening together, and I took leave of him early.

A NEW YORK paper says:—"For some time past counterfeit five cent pieces or nickels have become very common in Columbus, Ohio. Patient investigation has revealed the particulars of what has developed into a first-class sensation. These bogus coins have been traced to a young son of Colonel G. S. Innes, Warden of the Penitentiary. Upon being interrogated, the child said that he had been furnished with the coin by certain prisoners to purchase tobacco for them. This led to an investigation, and it now turns out that the making of the nickels has been going on in the Penitentiary without discovery. The moulds for the coin were made by prisoners, and the metal used was amalgam, used in plating harness in the harness shop. The fact that Charley Ulrek, one of the most expert counterfeiters in America, is confined in the Ohio Penitentiary, at once pointed him out as the leader of the counterfeiting party, and Warden Innes was interviewed on the subject. He said that bogus nickels were made by two men—John Fought, sent from Auglaize county for horse stealing, and Harvey Parker, sent from Lucas county for burglary. These men work close together in the moulding shop, and there made the coin in moulds, a genuine coin being used for a pattern. The material used was an alloy of copper and zinc. The Warden says the guard of the shop was cognizant of what the men were doing, but it was thought proper to wait awhile, in order to discover, if possible, all the men implicated. This season of waiting continued three days, and then the Warden found some of the stuff in the possession of his little boy. The boy said he had already spent five of the coins, which were given him by Fought and Parker. The two prisoners made a clean breast of the whole business."

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

CHAPTER XXXV.—IN TRANSITION.

IT was a hard fight, and the temptation was strong upon him to hide the truth. Humphrey would be content—he did not want to take his place; and he sat opposite to him now in the study, upon the very edge of the chair. Oh, it was ridiculous that he should have to give the place up to such a man—one whom he had to order before he could get him to sit down in his presence. And even when he felt that his mind was made up, and he was stoically determined to do that which was right, the rightful heir would keep upsetting his plans.

"You see, it would be so foolish, Master Dick."

"I can't help that, Humphrey. You must have your rights. I will not be a party to the imposture."

"Hadh't you better see a lawyer about it all?"

To be sure. There was Pratt—a barrister—he might give good advice.

Richard rang the bell and a servant came.

"Ask Mr. Pratt to be kind enough to step here."

"If you please, sir, Mr. Pratt's gone, sir. I put his letter on your table. Yes, there it is, sir."

Richard started.

"The rats desert the sinking ship," he muttered; and then blushed for his doubt of his friend.

"When did he go?"

"Hour ago, sir. Telegraph come from St. Kitt's, sir; and he wrote that letter, sir, for you, while they got the dogcart ready to take him to the station."

"That will do."

He tore open the letter, which enclosed the telegram from a friend in chambers—

"Come directly. A good brief for you. Don't lose the chance."

The hastily scrawled letter was as follows:—

"DEAR DICK—Don't blame me for going. I must take work when it comes; and honestly, for reasons I can't explain, I am glad to go.—Yours, "F. P."

"Must be genuine," thought Richard. "Well, it has happened at a good time. I'm glad he has gone." Then a thought struck him.

He and Humphrey might divide the estate. But, no, he drove it away; he would be honest.

"Shall I go over to St. Kitt's and fetch Mr. Lawyer Dancer, sir?" said Humphrey.

"Say no more about it, for heaven's sake!" exclaimed Richard. "I want no advice—I want nothing—only this, Humphrey, that you will forgive those old people—my—my parents. Let them have money to the end of their days, even if it is not deserved."

"Oh, but Master Richard."

"And promise me that you will not allow any prosecution and punishment to be held over their heads."

"Is it likely, Master Richard?" said Humphrey, laughing.

"Now let me have a few hours to myself, to collect my thoughts, and write a few letters."

Humphrey leaped from his chair.

"Bout draining the little meadow, sir?" he said. "Shall I set the men on? The tiles is come."

Richard's face contracted with pain, and then a bitter smile crossed it.

"My dear Humphrey," he said, taking his hand, "can you not realize your position? You are master here."

"No, sir," cried Humphrey, flinging down his hat, and then picking it up—"I'll be blessed if I can. This has put my head all in a buzz, like bees swarming, and I can't understand it a bit."

He left the room, and Richard gave a sigh of relief, seating himself at his table, and taking up a pen to write; but only to rest his head upon his hand, and stare before him, dazed—crushed.

"Please, sir, Mrs. Lloyd says can you make it convenient to see her?" said the footman; and then he started back, astounded at his master's anger.

"No," roared Richard, "I will see no one. Let me be left alone."

Then he hastily wrote a letter to Pratt, and fastened it down before dropping it in the letter bag, and threw it into the hall.

He had hardly finished before, knocking first softly, Lloyd opened the door, to stand trembling before him.

Richard pointed to the door.

"Go," he said, hoarsely. "I can't talk to you now. Another time—in a week—in a month—wait until then."

"But—"

"Go—for heaven's sake, go!" cried Richard, frantically.

And he was left alone.

Next came a note in pencil from Mrs. Lloyd.

"MY DEAREST BOY—Forgive me; it was for your sake I did all this. Pray be careful, for I fear Humphrey has some suspicion. Do see me, and give me your advice. "M. J. L."

"Poor woman!" he muttered, tearing the note bit by bit into tiny fragments. "Her plan is destroyed, save that this niece—my fair cousin, Polly—will sit in the seat she intended, without poor Humphrey is spoiled by prosperity. Poor fellow! It will be a hard trial for him."

"Be careful!" he said, laughing in a strange, harsh fashion. "Does she think I am going to remain her accomplice in this horrible fraud?"

He sat down, then, to think; but his brain was in a whirl, and he gave up in despair.

At last he woke up to the fact that it was growing late, and he remembered that he was to have accompanied the Reas on an expedition that afternoon, and now it was past six. They must have been and returned.

What would poor Tiny think?

A cold, chilling feeling of despair came over him now. What would she think? Yes, how would she take it? All must be over between them now—at least, for some years to come.

A servant announced dinner, and he bade him send it back. Locking the door after him, he sat down in an easy-chair, conscious that several times there had been knocks at the door, but paying no heed whatever.

Night fell, and he had not moved; and then, in a strange, fitful, dreamy fashion, the night passed away.

He must have dozed at times, he knew; for his

thoughts had wandered off into dreams, and the dreams had trailed off in turn into thoughts; and now it was morning, for the grey light was streaming through the antique casement, and a faint glow overhead told of the rising sun.

He threw open the windows, and the cool morning breeze, fresh from the Atlantic, seemed to calm and refresh him. His thoughts grew more collected; and at last he left the window, and went out into the hall, to seek his bed-room.

A bitter smile crossed his lip as he noticed the luxurious air of wealth about him, and then a sigh drew his attention to the fact that the cause of all his agony had been watching at his door the night through, and was now on her knees stretching out her hands as if in supplication for pardon.

"Oh, my boy—my boy, what are you going to do?" she groaned.

"Do?" he said, bitterly, as she crept to his feet.

"Act like the gentleman you wanted me to be."

"What do you mean, Richard—my son? There, I give up about Polly. I'll never say another word. You shall do as you like."

"I need not ask you if what you told me yesterday was true," he said, calmly. "Well, we must make amends."

"How? What do you mean?" she said, starting up.

"Mean? Why, by giving up everything to the rightful owner, and leaving him possession at once."

"Richard," she cried, passionately, catching him by the arm, "you would not be so mad."

"I shall be so honest," he said.

"What, give up—give up everything to Humphrey?"

"Everything," he said, coldly, "and at once."

"You're mad—mad!" gasped Mrs. Lloyd. "And after all I have done for you—to make you a gentleman."

"These are its effects," he said, bitterly. "You made me a gentleman—I wish to act as one."

"But, Richard—think—your father—your old mother—we shall be turned out in disgrace—to starve," she cried, piteously.

"Mother, I cannot help the disgrace," he said, coldly. "I would save you if I could, but the disgrace would be greater to keep up this horrible imposture."

"Hush!" she whispered, "the servants will soon be down—they may hear us. Oh, you cannot mean, Richard, what you say."

"I told Humphrey yesterday," continued Richard, "that I begged he would care for you; but that is only for the present. As soon as I can find means to earn my bread, I will keep you both myself; so that you shall be spared the disgrace of taking alms from the man you wronged."

"Fool—idiot—mad boy!" hissed Mrs. Lloyd, seizing his arm angrily, and shaking it. "You shall not act like this. I've been nearly thirty years building this up, and do you think I will have it crushed down like that? Say a word if you dare!"

"If I dare!" exclaimed Richard. "Do you know that Humphrey does more than suspect, that he knows all—heard all from your own lips in the lane yesterday?"

Mrs. Lloyd's jaw dropped.

"The true-hearted, honest fellow refused to take advantage of his position."

"Of course, yes," cried Mrs. Lloyd. "We'll pay him out, and let him go. Yes, he shall have Polly," she added, with a look of pleasure on her troubled face.

"Enough of this," said Richard, firmly. "Loose my arm. Some day I may be able to talk to you again. Now, go to your room, and make arrangements either for leaving, or make your peace with your new lord. He loves little Polly, and that will act as a shield for you."

"I say you shall not give in," cried Mrs. Lloyd, in a hoarse, angry voice.

But he dragged his arm free, and dashed up the stairs.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—MISTAKEN ZEAL.

IN the course of the morning Richard grew calmer. He had a long interview with Humphrey, giving him plenty of advice as to his future proceedings; and then sending for Mr. Mervyn, whom Humphrey happened to mention as a gentleman in whom he had great confidence.

But the messenger was not needed, for Mr. Mervyn was coming up the drive, and he was sent on another errand, with a couple of notes to Penreife—one to Sir Hampton, the other to Tiny.

"I was on my way here, Mr. Trevor," he began.

"My name is Richard Lloyd, Mr. Mervyn," said Richard, quietly.

"Yes—yes," said Mr. Mervyn, "I have heard. It is all over the place."

"So soon?" said Richard, bitterly.

"Yes; and directly I heard," said Mervyn, "I came up. But, my dear sir, it's like a romance; it can't be true."

"It's true enough," said Richard, coldly.

"But under the circumstances, Mr. Trev—Lloyd," said Mervyn, "Mr. Humphrey here won't press—"

"That's what I want Master Richard here to understand," said Humphrey. "As I says to him yesterday, sir, what's the good of it to me?"

"Exactly," said Mervyn, "right is right; but as Mr. Tre—Lloyd is innocent in the matter, and has made engagements and the rest of it, why not come to some arrangement satisfactory to both?"

"Mr. Mervyn, you are sent for here as the friend of Mr. Humphrey Trevor."

"Exactly, Mr. Tre—Lloyd. I beg your pardon, but my tongue is not so quick of apprehension as my brain."

"I want you to advise and help him in his novel position."

"I will," said Mervyn, frankly; "but I should like to advise and help you too. You see, Mr. Tre—there—Mr. Richard, you have possession."

"I give it up," said Richard.

"But you might hold it, and give friend Humphrey here a great deal of trouble."

"Mr. Mervyn, I claim to be still a gentleman, whatever my birth," said Richard, haughtily. "Will you act as Humphrey's friend?"

"I will."

"Then understand this, sir. I have had a hard fight, and I have come through the temptation, I hope, like a man. I now resign everything to Mr. Humphrey Trevor here. I ask his pardon for usurping his rights, and I beg his forbearance towards my poor

father and mother. I will not make this cruel injury to him worse by any opposition."

Humphrey shuffled in his seat, and tried to speak; but he only wiped his damp face, and looked helplessly at the man he was bound to oust.

"You see, Mr. Mervyn," continued Richard, "Mr. Trevor's will be a peculiar position."

"Yes," said Mervyn; "but had you not better get some legal advice?"

"What for?" said Richard. "Can anything be plainer? As I said, Mr. Trevor's will be a peculiar position. He will be the mark of the designing, and he will need a staunch friend at his side. Will you be that friend?"

"I will," said Mervyn, wringing his hand. "Yours too, my dear fellow, if you'll let me. But," he added, in a whisper—"Miss Rea?"

A spasm of pain shot across Richard's face, and he was about to speak, when Humphrey turned to him.

"Master Richard," he said, in a husky voice, "we was boys together, and played together almost like brothers. This here comes to me stunning-like. You say it's mine. Well, it aint my fault. I don't want it. Keep it all, if you like; if not, let's share and share alike."

The last words fell on empty air; for Richard had waved his hand to both, and hurried out of the room.

That evening, with beating heart, he walked towards Tolcarne gates. He had been busy amongst his papers, tearing up and making ready for that which he had to do on the morrow; and now, more agitated than he would own, he sought the lane where so many happy hours had been spent, to see if Tiny Rea would grant him the interview he had written to ask for, that he might say good-bye.

It was a soft, balmy night, and the stars seemed to look sadly down through the trees, as he leaned against a mass of lichen-covered granite, pink here and there with the pretty stonecrop of the place, waiting—for she was behind time.

"Will she come," he said, "now that I am a beggar without a shilling, save that which I could earn? Oh, shame!—shame!—shame! How could I doubt her?"

No, he would not doubt her; she could not have cared about his money. She was too sweet and loving and gentle. And what should he say—wait? No, he dared not. He could only—only—leave her free, that she might—

"Oh, my darling!" he groaned; and he laid his broad forehead upon the hard, rugged stone, weeping now like a child.

And the clouds came across the sky, blotting out one by one the glistening stars; a chilly mist swept along the valley from the sea, and all around was dark and cold as the future of his blasted life. For the minutes glided into hours, and she came not—came not to say one gentle, loving word—one God-speed to send him on his way; and at last, heart-broken, he staggered to the great floral gate, held the chilly rails, and kissed the iron, and gazed with passionate longing up at the now darkened house, and then walked slowly away, stunned by the violence of his grief.

The wind was rising fast, and coming in heavy sighs from off the sea. As he reached the lodge gates at Penreife, he paused, staring before him in a

helpless way, till a heavy squall smote him, and with it a sharp shower of rain, whose drops seemed to cool his forehead, and rouse him to action.

Starting off, with great strides, he took the short cut, and made for the sea, where the fields ended suddenly, their short, thyme-scented grass seeming to have been cut where there was a fall of full four hundred feet, down past a rugged, piled-up wall of granite, to the white-veined rock, polished by the restless sea below. To any one unaccustomed to the coast, a walk there, on a dark night, meant death—either by mutilation on the cruel rocks, always seeming to be studded with great gouts of crimson blood, where the sea anemones cling in hundreds, or else by drowning in the deep, clear water, when the tide was up, and the waves played amidst the long, chocolate strands of fucus and bladder-wrack, waving to and fro.

It was going to be a wild night; but it seemed in keeping with the chaos of his mind. Far out on the sea, softly rising to and fro in the thick darkness, were the lights of the fishing boats, and a score or so lay drifting with their herring nets; and in his heart there was not a rough fisher there whose lot he did not envy.

"And she could not come!" he groaned, as he stood there, with bare head. "Oh, my love—my love! To go without one gentle word, far, far away—and but yesterday so happy!"

The wind increased in force, and, with the gathering strength of the tide, the waves came rushing in, to beat in thunder against the rocks far beneath his feet; and then, with a rush, the fine salt spray was whirled up, and swept in his face, as he gazed straight out.

At another time he might have shuddered, standing thus upon the edge of that great cliff, with—just dimly seen in its more intense blackness—the rugged headland that stretched like a buttress into the sea upon his left. But now the horrors of the place seemed welcome; and he felt, as a smile came on his dripping features, that it would be pleasant to leap from where he stood right off at once into oblivion.

It seemed so easy, such a quiet way of getting rest from the turmoil and trouble of the future, that the feeling seemed to grow upon him.

"No," he said at last, "that would be a coward's end. I've done one brave thing to-day; and now, old friend, you shall have me again to toss upon your waves, but it shall be as your master, not as a slave."

As he spoke, he raised his hands and stretched them out, when he heard a hoarse cry behind him, and as he sharply turned and stepped back, something seemed to come out of the darkness, seize him by the throat, and the next moment he was over the cliff, suspended above eternity.

Then there was an awful silence, only broken by the roar, thud, and hiss of the waves below, as they rushed in, broke upon the rocks, and then fled back in foamy spray.

Richard's fingers were dug into the short, velvety turf; and he hung there, with his legs rigid, afraid to move, and wondering whether those were friendly or inimical hands that clutched his throat. It seemed an age of horror before the silence was broken, and then came a panting voice, which he knew as Humphrey's, to sob, as it were, in his ear—

"Master Dick, don't be scared. I've got you tight,

but I can't move. Get your nerve, and then shift your hands one at a time to me."

Without a moment's hesitation, Richard did so, with the damp gathering on his brow the while.

"That's brave, sir. Now get your toes in the cracks of the granite somewhere—gently, don't hurry—I won't let go, though I can't move."

Richard obeyed, drew himself up an inch, then another, and another, felt that he was saved—then made a slip, and all seemed over; but Humphrey held to him with all his strength; and once more Richard tried, tearing hands and knees with the exertion, till he got his chest above the cliff edge, then was halfway up, and crawled safely on, to fall over panting on his side.

"Quick, Master Richard, your hand!" shouted Humphrey.

And the saved had to turn saver; for the bailiff had been drawn closer and closer to the edge by Richard's efforts, and but for a sudden stretch, and the exercise of all his strength, the new owner of Penreife would have glided off the slippery grass into the darkness beneath.

"Safe," muttered Humphrey, rising. "Give me your hand, Master Richard. I thought, when I followed you, you meant to leap off."

"No, Humphrey," said Richard, sadly, "I will not throw my worthless life away. It is such glimpses of death as that we have just seen that teach the value of life. Good night; don't speak to me again."

Humphrey obeyed, and followed him in silence to the house.

The next morning, as soon as the letters had been brought in, Richard took his—a single one—and, without a word to a soul, carried a small portmanteau to the stable-yard, waited while the horse was put to, and then had himself driven off.

As he passed the lodge, a note was put into his hand by a boy. An hour after, he was in the train, and the destination of that train was the big metropolis, where most men come who mean to begin afresh.

Sketches of the Central Wilds.

BY A WALKING WALLABY.

XII.—THE LAST STRAW.

"JERRY come back," said that dusky gentleman, coolly, coming upon his master after a protracted absence; but Harry could afford no reproaches, and, besides, the black had returned at a most opportune time. Joe was away trying to track down some strays, and, from his lengthened stay, he was apparently meeting with unusual difficulties.

"Jerry go," said the black, upon the old shepherd's business being explained. "Jerry soon find; bring 'em back, all of 'em."

And when Harry had accompanied him for a distance, he struck off into the scrub, leaving his sometime master to start off in a fresh direction after sheep.

That same afternoon old Joe was seated under a tree by a water-hole, making a meal off his last piece of damper, after a long, tedious, and fruitless search for the missing bullocks. He had followed them up pretty well for a time, but a dry, desert-like tract which they had crossed had effectually baffled him; for though he

found the part where the strays had first entered the sterile regions—hoof-prints deeply indented in the dust—yet these marks soon disappeared as the ground grew stony, and after vainly trying to hit the trail some distance farther on, the old shepherd had to give up.

"If I had had a horse, I might have managed it," muttered Joe, rubbing his weary legs.

But Joe had no horse, for horses had become scarce at Harry's run, and duties that used to be performed at a trot or gallop were now only managed at a dreary walking pace, with sore and blistered feet.

"I'm sorry, too, poor chap; for he'll take on a deal at the loss of these strays. He's tried hard, and I've tried hard, but somehow it's what I always thought; we come too soon on the land, which will get better and better for those who follow after. We've had the first driving in the thin end of the wedge, and the wood has been hard and the wedge blunt."

The old man had with him his rifle, and as he sat slowly munching his dry, cake-like bread, he took off the old and put on a fresh percussion cap, lest the deadly weapon should be required in haste and then miss fire. It was an act of caution taught by long residence in a region of danger; and as he replaced the rifle in the hollow of his arm, he gave a keen glance round in all directions in search of peril—unsuccessfully, though; for all around in the glare of the hot Australian sun was still as death, not even the quivering of spray or leaf in a light breeze to catch his eye. So, worn out and tired, the old man still sat on beneath the fretted shade of the tree, and began thinking in that dreamy manner that begets dozing and rest to body and mind.

But the old shepherd would not have rested there so peacefully had he known that for the last six hours his every step had been tracked, and that now the black wings of death were hovering over him, gently fanning his sunburnt cheeks, and lulling him into a false sense of security—a rest whose sleep threatened to be one from which there should be no awaking.

Hot—still—calm—the sun reflected from every stone and patch of sand, there was something as oppressive in the silence to the mind as in the heat to the tired shepherd's body; but he sat unmoved—though now crawling serpent-like along, now rising to hurry for a few yards in a stooping position, behind a fringe of bushes, glided a black figure, spear in one hand, club in the other.

The savage seemed to be the very embodiment of caution, and had borrowed many of his actions from the wild animals of his district, whose instinct he seemed to possess more than the nobler thought and reason of man.

Now he crept snake-like, now ran upon all-fours, now crouched motionless and listening, but ever drawing nearer to where the shepherd sat and dozed, completely fagged.

Step by step, footprint by footprint, though perhaps only a few dry blades of grass were pressed down, the black followed the shepherd's trail, but always carefully looking out in front, lest he should come upon his prey too quickly for his own safety.

Strange tactics, full of stratagem, cunning, and treachery; and he was evidently not alone in his task, for, exemplifying how little the natives acted in concert, but trusted to self alone for safety, came at a short

distance behind another spear and club-armed savage, following the track of the shepherd and the black as well, slowly and cautiously as the man in front; imitating his every act, crawling, stooping, creeping on all-fours, dodging from bush to bush in a way taught by experience of how small an exposure of the body might mean death.

Though quite a mile from where the shepherd sat, the savages were within fifty yards of one another, and from time to time each turned carefully to see that he was not followed, and then slowly but surely continued his route.

It might have been expected that the second man would trust to the cunning of the first; but no, the work was done thoroughly, each man tracking for himself; and on they stole towards where now poor old Joe, the shepherd, slept heavily, with his head resting upon his breast.

Is there any truth in forebodings? Does some strange power so act upon the nerves as to send magnetically alarm notes coursing along those wondrous wires to the fortress of the heart?—warnings that say, "Beware, danger!" Else why should the old shepherd have started hastily from his sleep, shivering in spite of the heat, and the big sweat drops standing upon his forehead?

For start up he did, and, clutching his rifle, peered anxiously around. To see what? Danger, in the shape of a pair of spear-armed savages, slowly coming nearer and nearer, to send their deadly weapons quivering through his body?

No, all was still; for the blacks were distant yet, and had not detected the resting-place of their quarry.

Joe looked carefully around in a dazed manner, as if still half sleeping. He walked a few yards in different directions, pushing the branches aside with the barrel of his rifle, as he peered through and tried to make out where the hidden danger lay.

But lulling sleep whispered him that the alarm was false; the sun beat down upon his head, and in a few minutes he was again beneath the slight and grateful shade of the lightly foliaged tree, his head sank upon his breast, and he began to doze.

Ten, twenty, forty minutes—an hour—must have passed, and then the alarm must have been sounded once more, and loudly, for the blacks were in sight of the tree, though they could not see the shepherd till, with alarm upon his face, he started up; when, as if moved by the same muscles, the two savages fell to the ground, and lay motionless amidst the dry grass.

Joe gazed carefully around, once more examined the lock of his piece, and then let it fall into the hollow of his arm again, as with a shiver of uneasiness he began to walk up and down, muttering fragments of a half-forgotten prayer—words which brought up others; and then, after another glance round, the weather-beaten old man took off his cap, went down first upon one knee, then upon the other—knees that seemed to bend unwillingly, as though unused to the task, while with lowered head he began to repeat again the words of the old, old prayer.

Had the shepherd gazed up first towards the bright skies above, the chances are that his eyes would have fallen upon the threatened danger as he swept the horizon; but a strange fit seemed to have come upon him, for his face was bent towards the ground, and he

saw not that one of the savages rose from his lurking place, some thirty yards off, and stood with poised spear and outstretched arm, making ready for the deadly throw, while his fellow, at some little distance behind, imitated his actions.

Two slight but unerring spears poised ready for hurling, and Joe still motionless, save his lips, as he bent there over the ground, no apparent dread of danger to make him start up or move so as to baulk the savages' aim; and the man who for so many years had set their malice at defiance—meeting cunning with cunning—seemed now to have forgotten all his woodcraft, even to sitting down for rest within dangerous range of bushes dense enough to conceal a lurking enemy.

There was no warning now, no electric thrill that whispered danger, but with his back presented fairly to the savages as he knelt some two yards from the tree trunk, poor Joe seemed waiting the blow of the executioner.

The rustle of some passing animal, the flutter of a wing, the sharp, discordant cry of a parrot, would have served to break the trance; but all was still—still as the impending death—as two light spears flew straight to their mark through the clear air, and poor, faithful old Joe and the first savage rolled over, transfixed upon the earth.

Then there was the rapid rush of feet, and the second black, club in hand, darted forward to brain the fallen man.

One sickening, crashing blow upon the writhing savage's skull, and the club raised to deliver another, when, with a loud and pitiful cry of "No shoot! no shoot!" Jerry, the second black, leaped convulsively from the ground, the sharp crack of a rifle rang amongst the bushes, and the poor fellow fell bleeding by the hand of the man whose life he had tried to save.

Tried!—for Jerry's spear was too tardy in its flight to arrest that of the first black; and recovering himself for an instant from the shock, Joe had raised his rifle, as he thought, to slay his enemy before he fell back, clutching with both hands and trying vainly to thrust back the spear, which had entered between his shoulders, and now stood out many inches from his breast.

"No shoot—no shoot more!" howled poor Jerry, staggering about, after crawling up to the dying man. "Damn gun kill a fren'," and seizing the barrel with both hands he dashed the stock against the tree by his side, with the passionate action of a child. He then turned faint, pressed his hand against his bleeding shoulder, and fell upon his knees by the old shepherd.

"Mistake, lad," murmured Joe, in strange, gurgling tones. "Shake hands, Jerry. Young master—"

The old man had spoken his last words, and fell back amongst the long tropic grass, dead—the stern, fierce expression softly fading away into one of peace; and as hours rolled by, and the sun set, and then the moon shed her cool, silvery rays through the lightly foliaged trees, they fell upon the stiffening form of poor Joe, the shepherd; while by his side, faint with loss of blood, and in a dreamy stupor, lay the dusky figure of Jerry, whose benighted spirit seemed almost ready to make its escape through the purple lips of the wound made by his old friend's bullet.

And so they lay till the next evening, when, having collected all his friends, Harry, uneasy respecting their fate, started off in search of his two most valued ser-

vants, to come upon them at last, and fall upon his knees by Joe's side, completely unmanned, his followers standing aloof and glancing uneasily around in search of enemies.

"Jerry dead!" murmured a faint voice at Harry's side; and the young man started, for that really had been his impression when he saw the body of the black stretched out beside the shepherd.

"Jerry dead," murmured the poor fellow again. "No bury yet. Gib Jerry drink," and then he fainted.

A month later Jerry was on his way back to his tribe, rather weak, but proud in the possession of poor old Joe's rifle, and a couple of bullet holes in his person. Gurra Gully was deserted; and would you see the resting-place of old Joe, the shepherd, you must

"Search where the grass grows rank and high,
And the tangled boughs are spread;
Where only the beast and the savage pass by,
There shalt thou find—the dead."

THE END.

A Detective.

ONE of the most remarkable of the London police is Druskowitz. No one who looked at the short, blonde-moustached, and rather dandified young man would suspect him of being the cleverest of our detectives. He is about thirty-four years old, but looks less. His father was a Dalmatian. He himself speaks any number of languages, and is thus nearly always sent abroad where any case occurs in a non-English-speaking country needing the services of an English detective. In London his special work is among the foreigners who come over here as fugitives from justice. It is generally found that such persons betake themselves to special localities. Usually they lie in hiding for a few days, but they soon find it impossible to remain indoors any longer; and so, having shaved off their beards, if they had one, or having put on a false beard if they had formerly shaved, and wearing a wig and spectacles, they sallies forth at night, and being in want of amusement, they betake themselves to the Alhambra. That is a favourite resort of foreigners in London, and Druskowitz is, therefore, a frequent visitor there. He appears much interested by the performance, but his thoughts are elsewhere. He is watching some one individual in the audience, follows him when he leaves, tracks him to his hiding-place, and then sets to work to find out who he is. Woe be to the man who really is a criminal, if Druskowitz be on his trail. There is little chance for him. Druskowitz has an extraordinary moral influence over criminals: it is something like that of the rattlesnake upon the bird. He carries no arms, yet he does not fear to go up to an armed and desperate man and arrest him, and though armed and desperate he succumbs.

Druskowitz was engaged nine years ago in a remarkable case. In 1866, Vital Douat, a Bordeaux wine merchant, went to Paris and insured his life for £4,000. A short time afterwards he came to London in order to escape the consequences of a fraudulent bankruptcy. Some time later his wife, clad in widow's weeds, presented herself at the insurance office with the necessary legal documents attesting her husband's death. There

was nothing suspicious in the papers. Nevertheless, the company determined to make some inquiries before handing over the 100,000 francs. Druskowitz was called in, and he ascertained that on December 1st, 1866, some one named Bernardi had called at the registrar's office, in Plaistow, and registered the death of Douat, and it was entered as due to heart disease. Druskowitz found out the undertaker who had conducted the funeral, and learnt that everything had been properly ordered and paid for, and that the funeral had been performed at Leytonstone by the Catholic priest.

One thing seemed strange. The coffin had not been sent to any private house, but direct to the cemetery. Further inquiry failed to discover any doctor of the name appended to the certificate of death. The next step was to obtain an order for exhumation, and on the coffin being opened there was found, not the body of Vital Douat, but a block of lead. Further inquiry elicited the fact that Douat had been present at his own funeral, and afterwards gone to America, whence he supplied his wife with the documents intended for the insurance company. Some time afterwards he returned to Europe, went to Antwerp, bought a ship, sent her to sea with a lot of rubbish, and having previously insured her for a large sum, had her burnt at sea. Arrested and brought to trial, he was visited by Druskowitz, who felt sure that this was the man that he wanted. Douat was found guilty and condemned to death, which sentence was commuted to imprisonment with hard labour; but the French Government claimed him under an extradition treaty, and he was tried on the charge of fraudulent bankruptcy, found guilty, and sentenced to hard labour and imprisonment for a comparatively short period.

To Henry Lee.

OLD Trotty Veck informed us, in the "Chimes" (A fact within the knowledge of bread-winners),
"Seven days a week produce their dinner-times,
While only some of them produce the dinners."

Why was he not a cuttle in a tank?

For if he had been, and had lived with you,
He would have had his lucky stars to thank
For daily dinner, and no work to do.

The ticket porter had to earn his bread

Up-hill and down-hill, and in divers places:

The devil-fish is regularly fed

Before a dozen of admiring faces.

If working hard means living hard as well,

When doing nothing seems the wiser plan,

Will any one be good enough to tell

Which is it best to be—cuttle or man?

Good luck to the cuttles, I say,

And the rest of the creatures allied with them;

If you can but contrive that they pay,

I hope you'll be always supplied with them.

May they knock in platoons at your gate;

May they freely embellish your sea-shore;

And the least of their woes be their fate

When they settle aground on a *Lee*-shore.

ONE of our very youthful prodigies—and their name is legion—evidently an editor in embryo, wants to know if U P spells "up," why shouldn't P U spell "down"?

A Public Character in Java.

THE skill of the Chinese in every kind of manual labour is well known. One would suppose, then, that they would have made rapid progress in every art in which dexterity of manipulation was requisite. This is in fact the case in a few of the superior trades, de-

forms a fair average specimen. This man does a little of everything, or at least of everything that can be accomplished with the tools of which he is possessed. These tools have a distinctive character of their own; and, with the single exception of the hammer, it would be impossible to give them a name in any European language. This primitive mechanic has no permanent



A CHINESE MECHANIC.

pendent upon the refined and luxurious tastes of the higher and more educated classes for their support; but in some of the more simple occupations connected with everyday life they have remained absolutely stationary. One of these unimproved trades is that of a locksmith. There are in Java innumerable workmen of this class, scattered through the various towns and villages, and the one represented in our illustration

place of business, but what is here shown constitutes his workshop. He is thus at liberty to change his quarters readily when he deems it desirable, and can make a temporary settlement wherever his choice may fall; and wherever it may be, he is certain to find customers. He is also sure to be surrounded while at his work by some juvenile Malays, who exhibit intense interest in his proceedings, and are encouraged by a few

kind words to take up positions near him. For this humble, itinerant tinker of the East, with a somewhat satirical smile on his countenance, is invariably contented, and ready to bandy a few words in the intervals of his labour with his young admirers. He evidently likes his trade, which scarcely fatigues him at all, and provides amply for his very modest wants.

The Man in the Open Air.

A PLEASANT writer has remarked that perhaps the greatest pleasure which April brings in is the return of angling. The fishing rods are once again drawn from their hiding-places, the old tackle hunted up, and away to the pleasant banks of the rivers. It is not the mere hooking of fish which brings delight, although we may try to deceive ourselves with this notion; but the quiet scenery is a second great charm. The free wind beating upon the cheek, the glad waters sparkling and singing in the sunshine, the shade of trees, the song of birds, and budding beauties of nature after the long winter, are real sources of enjoyment.

How pleasant to wade along a flowery bank to fish, or wander in the uplands to watch the action of the birds, and to gaze upon the outstretched landscape—to see the arched sky and hear the distant whistle of the labourer in the fields, and, above all, to have a good book in your pocket! There are but few anglers who do not love poetry—they live in the midst of it.

And what does Seed say, who ought to be more read? "We are affected with delightful sensations when we see the inanimate parts of the creation—the meadows, flowers, and fields—in a flourishing state. There must be some rooted melancholy at the heart, when all nature appears smiling about us, to hinder us from corresponding with the rest of the creation, and joining in the universal chorus of joy. But if meadows and trees in their cheerful verdure, if flowers in their bloom, and all the vegetable parts of the creation in their most advantageous dress, can inspire gladness in the heart, and drive away all sadness but despair, to see the rational creation happy and flourishing ought to give us a pleasure as much superior as the latter is to the former in the scale of beings."

The fly-fisher is in his glory in these April days. Alternate sunshine and cloud-shade help him to his prey; and whether on Wandle, Test, or Itchen, the spotted beauties are now being courted by a line of invitation to come and be done brown at the fisher's table. But the greater banquet to the angler is to gaze upon the first newly caught trout as it lies amidst the grass and daisies, gradually changing its jewel-bedecked suit for the more sombre grey of departing life.

There is a brilliancy in all fish, which death destroys—a brilliancy hardly so much colour as a sheen produced by the tension of muscle, the freshness and transparency of skin, the expansion of fibre, and the traces of recent activity which are perceptible in the fish. Indeed, it is a lustre with which colour has so little to do, that we do not wonder at the failures we see of attempts to convey it to wood or copper by art. Nor are oil paintings in general, which have fish for their subject, more happy; we can see at a glance that they have been taken from specimens caught some time before, and that the varnish of the stream had left the original to give

place to tameness and inanition. As an example of life, perhaps no better could be pointed to than the admirable wood engraving of the eel in Major's edition of Walton, in which the creature is absolutely full of movement, and perceptibly making towards its natural element.

We could, therefore, wish there were more open-air painting, and that we had some gifted artist on the bank to examine and seize the exquisite character of a trout—one of the most lovely denizens of the water—immediately it has been removed from the stream. "That's a fine specimen of a Kennet trout," remarked a gentleman at our elbow, as we landed a three-pounder near Thatcham. And are their native places, then, to be known by the shape and expression of the fish? Certainly. Fish vary most widely from different waters. Their colour is consequent upon their situation. Moss, sand, mud, ooze, gravel, weeds, the refuse of manufactories—in short, everything that alters the nature of the water and the general circumstances of their condition—not only affects the colour of the skin, but even sometimes the form of the head and fins, and very commonly the colour of the flesh.

For instance, the trout of Pont and Blyth are red when cut into, while those of the Coquet are for the greater part of the year remarkably light; and after feeding upon the May-fly all trout improve vastly, both in flesh and contour. In fact, the change produced in fish by situation cannot be more strikingly illustrated than by referring to the different colours of flounders and eels caught in water of different coloured bottoms, and to the great difference there is between an eel taken from a stream mixed with the warm water from engines or manufactories, and an eel caught in water which is not so adulterated.

A curious proof that fish can be safely pronounced to be the produce of a particular stream recently came to our knowledge. A member of more than one angling society having taken a prize for the best basket of Thames roach, presented these same fish the next evening in competition for a prize for Colne roach at another club, but was immediately convicted of the attempted fraud by several of the members present, who were familiar with the various characteristics of these fish from the several waters of England, each of which shows in the roach some peculiar feature in which they differ from their congeners from other places.

The best flies for April are the oak-fly, or downlooker—by some called the ash-fly, cannon-fly, and woodcock-fly—the sand-fly, the stone-fly, the golden dun midge, the grannan or green tail, the spider-fly, or Harry long-legs, the whirling dun, dotterel hackle, golden plover hackle, Carshalton cocktail, and the ashy dun. We strongly recommend the fish, as soon as taken, to be put out of its misery by a blow upon the head; an act of mercy which has its reward in making the flesh more firm and set, a great recommendation when it is to be discussed at table.

Who is it that so passionately exclaims that strong and many are the claims made upon us by our Mother Earth? The love of locality, the charm and attraction which some one homely landscape possesses to us, surpassing all stranger beauties, is a remarkable feature in the human heart. We, who are not ethereal creatures, but of a mixed and diverse nature—we who, while we look out clearest towards the skies, must still have our



standing-ground of earth secure—it is strange what relations of personal love we enter into with the scenes of this lower sphere; how we delight to build our recollections upon some basis of reality—a place, a country, a local habitation; how the events of life, as we look back upon them, have grown into the well-remembered background of the places where they fell upon us. Here is some sunny garden or summer lane, beatified and canonized for ever with the flood of a great joy; and here are dim and silent places, rooms always shadowed and dark to us, whatever they may be to others, where distress or death came once to us, and since then dwells for evermore.

As little as we can deprive ourselves of the human frame, can we divest our individual history of its graceful garment of place and scene—leaves that were shed years ago, trees cut down and gone, yet live in our thoughts with the joy or the sorrow of which they were silent attendants. The hills which are radiant for ever with the dreams of youth, the rivers whose familiar voices have chimed in every sound of their lamentations and their joy; the house in which we were born; the high panelled family pew, with its brass rods and crimson curtains, in which the dear old clergyman put us—then free from dogmas—into as sound a sleep as our rocking-cot could ensure; the apple orchard, where windfalls were so plentiful, and more “russeties” came down with the surreptitious shake of the trees; the cheery cry of the farmer to “take more—fill your pockets, lads;” the “splash” which crossed the high road, and where we got many a mess of minnows, which no dish of whitebait at Blackwall ever surpassed; all these and many more pictures are photographed upon the retina of our minds, and we have but to close our eyes and, with the wand of memory, summon them up as vividly as when they were real.

Herein is no sickly sentimentality—for all men are thus delightfully haunted, more or less. And, thus embued, we visited but now a village on the K—stream, every feature of which was associated with our boyhood. But, alas, like Rip Van Winkle, if we desired to find the companions of our youth, the majority were alone to be met with “at home,” all within a stone’s throw; for kind Mother Earth, of which we have spoken, had taken them again to her bosom.

We entered the sacred precincts with our companion, placing our fly-rods resting on the old outer brick wall, cushioned with moss; and following our friend’s thoughtful example in putting aside our pipe (although fit emblem of mortality), we passed from tomb to tomb, recognising name after name of men who had risen to wealth, or struggled, waiting in the eddies of life to get into the swim which never came, and thus could account for the whereabouts of the larger proportion of those who had bowled us out at cricket, got the better of us in a fair and manly stand up at fisticuffs, or passed us in the well-contested race on land or water.

We then entered the church. But little alteration had taken place. An old and decrepit woman was engaged banging mat against mat, and thus, with a show of official industry, driving the dirt from one receptacle to another.

“What is your name?” we asked.

She told us she was the youngest daughter of —,

the sadler. Her father and mother were in the churchyard; she had no relatives left.

“Then,” said we, “you are Lizzy?”

She attempted to straighten herself, and remarked—“Who may you be? I aint bin called Lizzy for nigh thirty year.”

“And how is Ben Sturt?” we asked.

The poor woman turned sickly pale, and would have fainted but for an effort. My friend supported her.

“Ben Sturt!” she shrieked, in a voice which seemed to dodge behind every pillar of the silent edifice, and have a hurdle race in, up, and over all the old-fashioned pews. “Ben Sturt—my Ben Sturt—he were hung.”

And the demented soul—for there could be little doubt but that craze from misfortune had seized her—commenced dashing the mats and hassocks together in a way which enveloped us all in a cloud from which we were glad to escape, and drove us to attempt to make good our retreat into the open air.

She, however, was on our heels with an amazing celerity—not for a fee, as we were afterwards assured, but the utterance of that name—Ben Sturt—had roused curiosity in her to know who we were. God knows, had we thought for an instant that we should have given pain to the woman by this allusion, we would have been dumb.

“Who be you?” she asked, in a harsh whisper. “Who be you what knows, or has a mind to ask arter, Ben Sturt? You beant the man who hanged him? No, you beant him. He was a taller, stouter fellow, and clinged on by his legs. If you’d been him, I could a showed you some of the old vaults where the founders of this church are put—they looks out on God’s Acre through thick, iron-barred windows, they do—and” (with a malicious grin) “I would have locked you in. Poor Ben Sturt! He didn’t do it. ’Twas old Spurm, the gamekeeper. He set a trap for Ben, and told one lie, so was obliged to tell more and more, and then all the lies tied the knot under Ben’s bonny chin; and I—and I nursed his murderer while he were dying, and—and I pulled the pillow from under his head while he had the rattles.”

“Come—come away,” said my friend, now shocked and faint in his turn.

We shuddered. Still adventure to us is our very existence, so to “see it out” was our resolve.

“You think—I know you do,” said the old woman, peering under our wideawake, decorated with gaudy flies, as we resumed it in the porch—“that I oughtn’t to kick up these dustes in the church. There, now” (this with a deep sigh and a confidential air), “I can’t think where-ever the dustes comes from, unless they comes in for shelter out of the churchyard; and if they does, here am I sweeping up my lord and my lady, the tinker and the cobbler, and my slut and my wench; and presently I takes my broom, and ‘Out wi’ you,’ says I, ‘into your proper place.’ Oh, how we all does get mixed up together after we’re done with! But I sweeps gently like, for Ben’s dust is among what *they* call his betters.”

“Did you learn that of the clergyman?” asked our friend, kindly.

“No,” replied she, with unaffected astonishment. “No, he never speaks to I—he must have a lot to say at a time, and a lot to listen to him, before he speaks—dinner-like at the squire’s. No one gets nothing if they goes alone there; but if we goes in a mob, the

larders, and cellars, and butlery is turned out. One at a time won't do in this village; all the living dust is together—that wise.”

“Do you know, then,” we inquired, to take her back to the prominent theme, “whose this dust is, and whose is that?”

“Lor’ bless you, no. Arter they comes here, ’tis the only dust they can kick up then” (here an unearthly chuckle—did the old crone have an idea of a witticism?) “I’m obliged to mix ’em together.”

We pointed to a tablet on the wall: “Some are taken, some are left.”

“That may be,” said she, “but God’s time is man’s time. The best clocks and watches must be set by it. God calls the good to take them from dangers, and God takes the bad to take them from their triumphs.”

We placed a piece of silver in her hand.

“Thank you,” said she, with a curtesy; “that goes into the bank where the greatest profit, without usury, is got,” and she dropped the coin into the poor-box close to the door.

“One word more,” said she as we left the church, touching us impressively on the arm. “You seem to be a liberal gentleman, and fond of curiosities. I can give you an inch of the rope as hung my Ben Sturt, if you’ll look in at the cottage next the wheelwright’s.”

Poor Lizzy! she was the belle of the village in our early days; courted by all the yeomen around, flirting and rejecting in turn, while her silent fondness and her heartstrings were intertwined with Ben Sturt, whom Sturm, the keeper, being jealous of, got hung, to clear the way to pay his addresses to a—broken-hearted maniac.

From First to Last; or, Gwendoleen’s Engagement.

CHAPTER VII.

LUCKILY, I had a great deal of work on hand just then, and little leisure to bewail my sorrows, amorous or otherwise. I sat up at the club writing letters until past midnight, and then I went home to bed, but not to sleep. I could not sleep. Again I could feel her little head on my shoulder, and hear the groan of anguish that burst from her lips. There is nothing like work when one is in trouble. At two o’clock I got up, and wrote until seven, when my servant came in to call me.

I had just finished breakfast (during which meal I had been studying the wording of a lease, for I was determined that I would not let my thoughts dwell on Gwendoleen), when a note was handed to me, in Harford’s writing. I opened it. It ran as follows:—

“SIR—After what took place yesterday, you will scarcely be surprised at receiving this communication from me. I beg that you will entirely discontinue your visits to Miss Ramsay. I do not desire the honour of your further acquaintance, either for myself or my future wife. If we meet henceforth, it will be as strangers.”

“FLORANCE HARFORD.”

“He must be mad,” said I, as I put the letter by in my desk.

And then I went back to my work, and dismissed the subject from my mind. I was very busy all day,

and had no time to think of Harford; but Gwendoleen’s sad, pale face haunted me. Work as hard as I might, I could not work her out of my mind. For three days I never went near Portland-place. At the end of that time I received a note from Mr. Ramsay, asking me to dinner. I wrote and declined. The next day I left my card at the house, but never asked to go in; the following morning I received a visit from Mr. Ramsay himself. He wanted me to dine with him that same evening. I was able to say with truth I was engaged.

“Well, then, come to-morrow.”

I hesitated.

“It is always best to be frank, Mr. Ramsay. You are very kind, but perhaps you’ll excuse my dining at your house until this wedding is over.”

He looked at me with his keen, searching expression.

“You’ve had a quarrel with that young jackanapes, and I am not astonished.”

“I have had no quarrel—it takes two to quarrel, and I have no intention of making one of the two; but I have received a very foolish, offensive letter from Harford (which, by the bye, I have not answered), and I must decline meeting him.”

“Well, you shan’t meet him. I won’t ask him the evening you come.”

I shook my head.

“You are very good, sir; but for many reasons I am sure I do right in abstaining from visiting at your house for the present!”

I saw he understood me, for he pressed the matter no farther. He was out of spirits, poor old gentleman, and confided to me that he was miserable about Gwendoleen’s engagement.

“I don’t think I am fanciful, Fairfax,” said he; “but I have taken the most unaccountable antipathy to that fellow. I can scarcely bear to be in the same room with him, and he is so altered during the last few days. I never thought much of him, but I did think him a good-looking, gentlemanlike young idiot. But of late he has become positively boorish—he scarcely answers when he is spoken to. I don’t know what to make of him, and Gwen, I’m sure, is miserable—she looks like a ghost; but yet she won’t break the engagement off. My firm belief is that she is afraid to do so. Now, what do you advise me to do, Fairfax?”

“I really don’t know what to advise, Mr. Ramsay; but I think it a miserable business from first to last.”

Two or three days after Mr. Ramsay’s visit to me, I had to go to Midborough on business, and the Silcotes had made me promise to stay with them. As I passed each well-known station on the line, I thought of who had been my companion the last time I was there. I found Pauncefort full, as usual. The evening of my arrival I took Lady Silcote in to dinner; she was full of some wedding that had taken place that day at Midborough.

“Were you present, Lady Silcote?” I asked, by way of something to say; for I found my attention frequently wandering during the good lady’s discourse.

“Oh, no, I never could bear Mrs. Ramsay. I was very fond of her daughter—ah, by the bye, you never met Gwen—but the mother I disapprove of highly.”

“And whom did you say she had married?”

I was all attention now.

“Oh, a dreadful man—a Mr. Vaux; he is a shocking

gambler, and a very *mauvais sujet* altogether. But, whatever he may be, he is good enough for her. She deserves anything for the way in which she behaved to that sweet girl—quite drove her into running away from home. However, that has turned out a very good thing for Gwen; for she ran off to an uncle who was not on terms with her mother, and who, we hear, has adopted her, and is going to leave her all his money.”

“Really?” I replied, quietly.

So Mrs. Ramsay was married. I wondered how Gwendolen would take the news—whether it would be a matter of regret to her now.

I was detained in—shire nearly a week, and during the whole time I was in a state of feverish anxiety; one moment deciding that it was far wiser for me to be away from town, the next feeling that I must return. Fortunately, I was not my own master. Until my business was completed I could not leave. The last day of my stay at Pauncefort, I received a letter from Valentine Ramsay. I found it lying on my dressing-table when I returned home, only just in time to dress for a large dinner party. At the sight of his handwriting I felt my heart turn cold as ice, and my hands trembled nervously as I broke the seal. Had he written to tell me all was over? It had been decided that the wedding was to be a very quiet one; and Harford, I knew, was bent on hurrying it on. Had he worried and terrified Gwendolen into giving her consent to its taking place at once? I knew she feared him, and fear exercises a strange fascination over some women; and she had appeared of late too thoroughly crushed and unnerved to oppose any one.

My fears were soon set at rest.

“DEAR FAIRFAX”—the letter ran—“Gwen’s engagement is at an end. I have given your young friend his *congé*. He had grown simply unbearable the last week. My private opinion is that he drinks; but whether he does or not, Gwen’s evident daily increasing antipathy to him was quite a sufficient reason for my breaking off the marriage. Thank God, there’s an end of it! I was tired to death of the whole affair. When are you coming up to town? Soon, I hope. I suppose you won’t refuse to dine with us now. You’ll find poor Gwen looking terribly upset and out of sorts. I should say she ought to be delighted at the escape she has had; but then I don’t understand women—never did! Kittle cattle, all of them! “Yours, “V. R.”

Then Gwen was free! Thank God! There are moments when all words seem inadequate to express feeling, but when every thought is a prayer. I believe that the remembrance of my deep, heartfelt gratitude that hour will only cease with life.

It was too late for me to leave Pauncefort that evening, but I was longing to depart. Not heaviness, but the most intense anxiety, endured for the night. I was up and dressed by seven o’clock. Before noon I was in town. I drove straight from the station to Mr. Ramsay’s house. He had just gone out.

“Could I see Miss Ramsay?” I asked, and was shown up into the drawing-room, where Gwen was sitting. I had not seen her for three weeks, and she must have read in my face how horrorstruck I was at the change in her appearance. She was naturally pale and thin, but she had become a mere ghost of her

former self; and she looked so miserable, too. She had aged years in appearance during the last few weeks. She tried to falter out a few words of welcome as we shook hands; but directly the servant left the room she sank down on the sofa, sobbing bitterly, and moaning that she should “never, never forgive herself for her conduct to poor Florance.”

It is not particularly pleasant to see the woman you are in love with weeping bitterly about another man; but I knew how to attribute Gwen’s grief to its real cause—a morbid state of the nerves. This was only the reaction after months of feverish anxiety and restlessness. From first to last I knew she had doubted the wisdom of her engagement, and regretted having entered into it; but now that the matter had been taken out of her own hands, she dreaded the effect disappointment might have upon Florance, who could never bear the slightest reverse with ordinary fortitude. I sat down beside her, and talked the matter over calmly. I tried to put my own feelings out of the question, and spoke as any old grey-headed confessor might have done. I told her that she had acted unwisely in ever engaging herself to Florance, but that she must not reproach herself for an error in judgment as bitterly as she would for an intentional wrong.

“But I have wronged him cruelly,” she said.

“Not wilfully, my child,” I replied.

She shook her head sadly.

“More than you know,” she murmured, as a bright blush overspread her face.

I snatched her to my heart with a sudden impulse.

“My own darling, you are mine—are you not, Gwen?”

“Yours, and yours only,” she whispered, softly, raising her lovely blue eyes to mine.

She was leaning with her pretty fair head on my shoulder, when suddenly she uttered a piercing shriek, and threw her arms round my neck, crying—

“George—George!—my own—my darling! Oh, Heaven spare him! Ah-h-h!”

Something at that moment whizzed past my ear, and the Dresden china candelabrum on the cabinet close by fell down with a crash. I looked round, and in another second I was grappling in a life or death struggle with Florance Harford.

“I’ll kill you first, and then her,” I heard him mutter; and then, as my eyes met his, the fearful truth suddenly flashed across my brain that nothing could save me, for I was contending against one who had the strength of madness on his side. In another moment he had thrown me heavily against the corner of the cabinet, and then I saw and heard no more.

* * * * *

“He’ll come round now. It was a near thing, though; the twentieth part of an inch lower, and the wound would have been fatal.”

These were the first words that greeted my ears as I returned to consciousness, and found myself lying on the sofa in the inner drawing-room, two doctors bending over me, Valentine Ramsay at the foot of the couch, and my darling, pale and trembling, but tearless, leaning on her uncle’s arm, watching anxiously, and waiting for the verdict that was to bring life or death to her young heart. In another moment she was kneeling by my side.

When I was quite well again, they told me what a narrow escape I had had, and not only I, but Gwendoleen too; for in her terror she fainted away before she reached the bell. The footman, however, had heard the report of the pistol, and rushed upstairs; and his timely entry saved my life, and probably hers too.

All this is a tale of the past now. Gwendoleen and I have been married nearly three years; but before we married I heard from her own dear lips the tale of her early trials and sufferings—what a miserable, disreputable home she had had, and how jealous her mother had been of the daughter whose attractions she feared would rival her own. I have never met my mother-in-law; and it is an honour, I confess, I do not desire. Mrs. Vaux and her husband live entirely abroad, and they speak with horror, we are told, of “the dullness of English society” and “insular prejudices.”

Gwen and I are very, very happy. We live close to Uncle Val. At one time he wished us to live with him, but I could not agree to that—I must have my darling all to myself; so I told him that he would find his little godson and namesake very troublesome as a permanent guest, and he wisely yielded the point. There is only one drawback to our otherwise perfect happiness—poor Florance is still a raving maniac; he has never had one lucid interval, and his madness is of the dangerous order.

For some time Gwen was perfectly inconsolable, declaring that she was the cause of his losing his reason; but I am happy to say that by degrees we have managed to dispossess her of that idea. The doctors all assured us that the taint was there, ready to show itself on the first opportunity; that poor Harford had really been out of his mind for weeks before that morning when he attempted my life. It transpired too, then, that his father had died mad; and that the mysterious business that had called Florance away from town on the day that Gwendoleen and I first met was a summons to attend the deathbed of an aunt (a sister of his father's) who had been in confinement for years, and who only recovered her reason a few hours before her death.

Poor Harford! How often I had been unjust to him! How frequently I had judged him harshly! Ah, well, he is in all-just and all-merciful hands now. The physician to whose care he was confided has told me that he cannot last long; and the release, whenever it comes, will be a happy one. The cloud which darkens his life now is dense and heavy; but through the grave and gate of death he shall pass into that region where the mists and vapours that obscure his earthly path shall be dispelled for ever.

THE END.

Water Communication.

AN invention made, or rather developed and strikingly perfected, in Germany allows of existing water communication being turned to the best account. It is not too much to say that the usefulness of some rivers and canals has been trebled since the introduction of the towage system. For ingenuity, cheapness, and despatch combined, this mode of locomotion beats all others. Beautiful Dresden will have given many of

your readers the picture I want to place before you. Imagine a heavy chain laid along the bottom of the river, and moored at both ends. This chain, passed through the bows of a steamer, revolves round a drum worked by the engine, and is paid out at the stern. The effect of the arrangement is that, as the drum revolves, the vessel is propelled forward along the chain, like a man pulling himself up by a rope. Now, the adhesion of the chain to the bottom of the river being equal to 75 per cent. of its weight, no matter how heavy the ship and its cargo may be, it cannot lift the cable from its place.

Thus, while the weight which can easily be moved onward in this simple manner is practically unlimited, the expense entailed is no more than the fuel consumed in working the drums. Many a time, when roaming about in the charming valleys skirting the Elbe, have I wondered at the extraordinary spectacle presented by these steamers. A tiny boat, without paddles or screw—in nothing a steamer except the engine—moves along the chain with a rapidity not much inferior to that attained by the ordinary paddle-wheelers on the stream. Attached to this boat you see a perfect fleet of barges, each one as large again as their diminutive leader, and all heavily laden with grain, stone, or some other ponderous cargo. As the small craft glides on her way, breasting the current without effort, and dragging from ten to twenty vessels after her, the sight reminds one of a dwarf with the Tower of Babel on his back. Yet such are the draught powers of this naval pigmy, and so jauntily does he do his work, that he can afford to labour for next to nothing. Barges entrusted to his guidance perform any distance in about a third the time they could by sail or oar; and as the company charge at an average rate of only 1d. per mile for every hundredweight, the skippers save two-thirds of the cost formerly incurred. The impetus given to navigation by this profitable device is enormous.

In 1873, the company towed between the cities of Magdeburg and Dresden alone 10,000 barges, carrying about 3,000,000 cwt., and travelling an aggregate distance of 500,000 miles. As the friendly cable is laid down all the way from Hamburg to Magdeburg, Dresden, Schandau, and farther on to the Bohemian frontier, the total figure of vessels towed must be something immense. The like beneficent machinery is in use on the Rhine, the Oder, &c., and is fast finding its way to other waters. Now that Northern Germany has got to the end of its firewood, and, in addition to indigenous peat and an inferior sort of coal, has to resort to the lignite of the Central Provinces, the advantages of the towage system cannot be too highly rated, even in the present scarcity of canals. If the cry for canals has been lately heard from so many points at once, this is partly owing to the incalculable benefit to be derived from them upon the universal adoption of the towage system. What has been already done enables us to anticipate the time when, unless the greatest possible speed is required, heavy goods will no longer be conveyed by rail.

A WOMAN who inspires love,
How thoroughly she knows it:
But as to how she loves in turn,
Why, as to that, how goes it?

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER I.—THE HOUSE UNDER THE PORCH.

IT is not a pleasant thing to be rowed across the Thames in the darkness. There is danger, and there can be no help. The boat may sink, it may be run down by the great hulls of ships moving through the blackness, and what if a shriek for help were sent up, or desperate hands fought and buffeted with the water, how would it avail? A moment, and Death would have his own, and the few frail timbers that had staved him off so far would be parting and drifting out to sea.

Especially unsuited to the river are the November nights, when fog intensifies the darkness, and there is often a wind, which, meeting the flowing water, crests it into waves. This was so one November night, when at a late hour two men suddenly appeared on the water-stairs at Rotherhithe, and rapidly descended them.

Late as it was—and it had chimed midnight—a boat was waiting, and a man rose out of it, his face just visible by the red glow of a pipe he was smoking.

"Jacob!" whispered one of the two persons who were descending the slimy steps with no little caution.

The boatman threw his pipe hissing into the water.

Simple as the act was, it appeared to be in the nature of a prearranged answer to the summons, for no word was uttered; but the boatman offered his arm to the man who had accosted him to help him into the boat. The other and evidently younger man, his companion, leapt lightly in, causing the frail structure, a mere shallop, to rock from side to side, until he had seated himself in the bow. His companion sat in the stern. The boatman mechanically dropped the oars into the rowlocks or thwarts, as they are variously termed, and manœuvred his little craft so that its head pointed across the river. Then he struck out with the steady regularity of the experienced oarsman.

Mist overhead in place of sky, and the black, heaving water underneath. A cold wind chilling to the bone. Nothing meeting the eye but the lights of vessels, red in the half-fog, with long reflections like corpse lights in the river. A pervading sense of mystery, danger, and helplessness. It was not agreeable, but the river is of no great width; and though they once narrowly escaped fouling a hawser that impeded their way, the little group reached Wapping in safety.

As they did so, a lad stepped out of the gloom into the dim glow cast by a distant lamp, to give a hand to the boat. He was one of the waterside loungers, in a blue guernsey, and with an old cap, greasy with use, dragged down behind his huge flap ears, suggesting the idea of a caul worn as a precaution against drowning, though the villainous face it surmounted indicated that this was unnecessary, seeing that the wearer was in all probability marked out for a higher and less reputable end.

It might have been the unwonted alacrity with which the lad came forward, and sprawled a raw hand on the boat's stem, which awoke the suspicions of the man called Jacob, or his lynx eyes might have detected what was invisible to his companions. Whatever the cause, he at once addressed him in a sharp, angry tone—

"Who was that yonder, Joe?" he demanded.

"Wheer?" retorted the other, sullenly.

"Under the wall. He went away this minute. Come, out with it, who was he?"

"Nobody."

With one of the oars grasped in both hands, Jacob made as if about to fell the lad with it; but, abandoning that intention, he sprang out into the mud, and gripped him by the throat. The grip was so firm that the eyes started—the mouth open, like that of a dead fish, gave forth no sound, and the raw hands went up in a supplicating clutch.

"Lookee here!" Jacob shouted, in a voice hoarse with suppressed sound. "If you're deceivin' of me, look out. If you're up to tricks, look out!"

The lad tried to asseverate his innocence, but in vain—he was too far choked for that.

"If mischief comes o' this," Jacob went on, "I wouldn't give a rope's-end for your life—d'ye hear?—not a rope's-end for all the breath in yer body. Get out!"

He flung him away as he would have flung off a mastiff that had attacked him; and then turning to his fare, who had meanwhile stepped out of the boat, respectfully touched his tarpaulin hat, and received a coin, which the young man pressed into the palm of his hand, with a word of thanks.

"Good night, Jacob," said the one who had addressed him on the other side of the river.

"Good night, gentlemen," was the gruff response.

And looking back, they saw that he remained standing by the boat, his attention divided between their rapidly retreating forms and the boy, who crouched somewhere in the darkness.

The old stairs of Wapping have been celebrated in song; the neighbourhood is nevertheless far from poetical, or even salubrious. By night it is singularly gloomy and repelling; a sense of rottenness and river-mud pervades it; and the few outcasts who lurk there are as repulsive as the locality in which they burrow.

The companions who had crossed the river did not belong to this part. That was evident. Though muffled up in rough overcoats, and with shawls wrapped about their necks, and felt hats drawn low over their brows, they had the bearing of gentlemen. An air of superiority defied concealment. Yet they walked briskly on as men who knew the way, and were familiar with all that met their view.

Clearly they had landed at the old stairs before; were influenced neither by curiosity nor apprehension, but had some object in view which was paramount and all-absorbing.

This object led them out of the beaten track.

In a few seconds they turned down a narrow alley, running between two lofty houses, dark, noisome, and deserted. In the middle of this alley they abruptly stopped, and looked back. It was so dark that the dim street at the end out of which they had turned had a light, cheerful look, the effect of contrast.

"We are followed," said the elder man. "Listen!"

Each stood holding his breath, and looking down the alley towards the street.

The silence of the place was profound. Not a footstep in the street; not a rustle in the alley. Only the wind came in moaning gusts.

"You are mistaken."

This from the younger man, in a faint whisper.

"Hush!"

A little finger gave emphasis to the word.

"But there is no sound?"

A quick clutch of the arm enforced silence and renewed attention. There was still no sound, but an object suddenly impeded the outlook. It was black against the light, its outline was that of a face and an outstretched arm.

Some one peering cautiously round was entering the passage and moving towards them.

They hesitated, but not for long. The first impulse to confront the intruder was momentary, when they turned and stole softly onward, softly but swiftly. The echo of their footfalls betrayed them to the man who followed, and whose steps were absolutely noiseless; but they had one advantage over him. They darted onward as readily in the darkness as they could have done in the light, while he had to grope his way forward, in obvious ignorance of the road he was taking.

Thus the pursued distanced the pursuer, and were the first to emerge from the darkness. Free of the alley, they were in an open space of desolate aspect. Buildings tottering of their own rottenness, and only saved from falling by huge balks of timber; rough sheds serving as factories, wherein noisome trades were carried on; carcasses of new buildings, incomplete, yet in ruins, mingled in depressing confusion. And over all rose, dotted here and there, tall houses, surviving from bygone times, and surviving also the respectability which had rendered them the pride of the locality.

It was toward one of these latter structures that the two men directed their hasty steps, looking back from time to time to see if they were followed. But so far as they could judge in the imperfect light, their pursuer had not emerged from the gloom of the narrow alley.

"Quick, and we shall defeat him," urged the younger man.

"Don't make too sure of that, Randolph," was the reply; "this is not the first night nor the second that we have been watched, and always by the same man."

"So much the better," returned Randolph, decisively.

"So much the better?"

"Yes."

"I do not see—"

"Not see that if this fellow, whoever he is, had discovered anything the first time he would not have troubled himself the second, and if the second he would not have been here to-night?"

"True, but it is this pertinacity I fear. He must have wormed out something, or he would not have taken this trouble; and if he has the slightest clue, you know what we may expect."

"Is it not possible, Edmund, that he may be merely a common thief—a pickpocket—with designs upon our watches or our money—nothing more?"

"Yes, it is possible; but is it probable? The same man, the same tactics—always watching, never attacking. Is that the course of a vulgar thief? No, Randolph; depend on it, our secret summonses are intercepted, read, and understood. Pagnell was right: there is no lock in the world that cannot be picked, no secret

writing that cannot be read. But here is the porch—in with you."

As he spoke he thrust Randolph up the steps of the heavy, overhanging porchway of a house, and quickly followed him.

From the gloom of that place they could mark unobserved whatever might take place. Knowing this, and confident that their progress so far had been watched, they crouched in silence for no inconsiderable time. Twice the distant clocks sounded the quarters, and in all that space they scarcely exchanged a word or moved a limb.

The patience and endurance of the men showed what weighty interests were at stake, and what reason they had to fear the prying eyes of those who might be curious as to the business which had brought them to that dismal spot.

It was Randolph who, with the impatience and impetuosity of youth, broke the silence.

"We alarm ourselves in vain," he said.

"I begin to be of your opinion."

"There is not a sound—not the faintest indication of our having been followed."

"No."

"Let us venture, then."

The man he had addressed as Edmund did not reply; but, clutching the handle of a bell suspended in the porch, rang it softly seven times in this order—twice, once, twice, once, once. Then they waited.

The house with the porchway was ruinous and apparently deserted. The windows were coated with dirt, the door seemed embedded in its frame; the three steps of the porch were green with fungi. The rusty iron-work of the railings had long since eaten through the paint which once covered them, but which had crumbled and gone.

After a while there was a light rustle in the hall, light glimmered through a begrimed fanlight, and a soft, musical voice was heard demanding who sought admission.

"Foes!" was the singular answer.

Then the door opened, and a rosy-faced, blue-eyed, plump young girl of the German type—her flaxen hair in two long tails over her shoulders—stood there, shading a light from the draught with a delicious little hand, transparent as a sea-shell. She looked a welcome with her merry eyes and rosebud of a mouth, and admitted the guests, on whom the door immediately closed.

As it did so, a lithe figure started out of the shadow of the street, as if it had risen out of the ground, and darted into the porch. Once there it threw itself on its knees, and applying a quick ear to the aperture under the door, listened intently. It was an hour later when the figure stole out of the porch, noiseless because barefooted, and made off.

The eyes and the face were those of the boatman Jacob's lad, Joe!

CHAPTER II.—THE EXPECTED DECLARATION.

THAT night there was a reception at a house in Arlington-square. The event—in the opinion of the waterman, whose experience justified him in being critical—was of a special nature. A striped awning, red and white, extended over the pavement, and a scarlet drugget covered the steps and extended along

that vista of light and brilliancy, the hall, as far as the eyes of the curious could follow it.

These were indications of something grand; but in addition there was the fact that not a guest arrived until it was about time for ordinary guests to be taking their departure, and in the small hours the noise of carriage wheels was incessant.

"So many M.P.s comin' up from the 'Ouse," the under-footman confided to the waterman; "and they're awful late."

The waterman nodded, mused a moment or so, then ventured on a question:

"Yore guv'nor's more to do with t'other end o' town, aint he?" was the inquiry—"what they calls a City magnet, like?"

"Certingly, we 'ave business relations that way," returned the under-footman, graciously; "but our circle's quite West—quite a M.P. circle."

The arrival of fresh representatives of the M.P. circle prevented further revelations, and it may be doubted whether, even under favourable circumstances, James would have admitted that he served the Framlingham Brothers, City men, who did a great deal in the way of keeping a large M.P. and West-end circle in kite-flying and other amusements, and who, therefore, found it to their advantage to mix pretty freely with their best customers. This was the truth; but the pride of the servants'-hall exceeds even that of the drawing-room, and its geography may be indicated by a map bounded on all sides by the West-end.

The suite of rooms in which the Brothers Framlingham received was magnificent: large, lofty, lit with innumerable wax tapers, and blazing with gold. A little overdone in the latter respect, perhaps; but (if the sordid suggestion may be permitted) it had a good trade effect, and was calculated to impress favourably even the elevated M.P. circle.

Possibly the Brothers might have had some dim idea of this. He—for there was only one left alive, though the firm was always spoken of in the plural number—was not deficient in shrewdness, though Nature had done what it could to render him venerable, and culture had given him a suavity of manner that was irresistible. Hector Framlingham was a tall, broad-shouldered man, with a fine head. His hair was white and flossy, his eyebrows quite black, overhanging eyes of the same colour, full of latent fire. His cleanly shaven face was full of angles, his mouth long, thin, and firm. Much fine linen, as much velvet as evening dress would admit of, and more gold chain, gold eye-glass, diamond stud, and glittering button than is quite consistent with the purest taste, might almost be set down as characteristics of the man.

It was his pleasure to receive his guests standing on his own hearth-rug, a great mirror over the mantelpiece behind him reflecting the whole room; and in this task he was assisted by his daughter, Ruby Framlingham, who sat a little apart, wearily inclining as each new-comer was presented to her—wearily rising as those of most importance seemed to merit that honour.

Weariness—or was it abstraction?—robbed the sweet face of Ruby Framlingham of its great charm. Those small, delicate features of hers were full of sensitiveness, expressed every fleeting emotion, and it was when lit up and animated by strong feeling that they appeared

to the most advantage. In repose she might have been thought plain; but under excitement she became positively charming.

It was her father's taste that she should dress richly.

So the sweet, fragile girl, with eyes that were so faintly blue that they seemed grey, and hair so light that it was well-nigh colourless, and a complexion delicate as the hue of the almond blossom, was robed in glistening satin, heavy with lace, while a fortune in diamonds glittered on her bosom, and encrusted her thin wrists. Against the ultramarine velvet of the fauteuil on which she sat she looked a jewel in an open case.

The rooms were filling. A soprano from the opera had just executed a brilliant specimen of vocal pyrotechnics, under cover of which everybody had talked their hardest.

"Exquisite!" cried every one who hadn't listened, as the soprano ceased.

"Charming!"

"Delicious!"

The servant at the door interrupted further laudation.

"Mr. Edmund Harcourt," he announced; adding after a moment, "and Mr. Randolph Agnew."

The announcement created little sensation among the company, a few of whom only condescended to turn their heads, as two young men—one much the junior of the other—entered the room, and made their way toward their host. Their reception was gracious to familiarity; one, at least, was evidently a friend of the family.

"Ruby, my love," said Framlingham, when he had accorded a warm shake of the hand, "Mr. Harcourt."

She looked up with a start. Was it abstraction which had caused her to keep her eyes fixed on the floor, as if unconscious of the presence of the new-comer? Perhaps so; and it might have been the consciousness of this which suffused her face with crimson blushes, and caused her eyes to flash with liquid light, as she rose and held out her hand. All the weariness was gone. The face was beaming, and the voice in which she offered a few words of welcome rang with a clear music.

Harcourt took the proffered hand, pressed it slightly, and bowed with unnecessary ceremony.

All the colour died out of the girl's sensitive cheek; then it returned in a crimson rush.

"We had feared that—some of our friends—might disappoint us this evening," she forced herself to say.

"We have unfortunately been detained," was the quiet reply.

And Harcourt turned to his friend Agnew, as if presenting him.

"Delighted, I'm sure," said Ruby, in her company tone—the tone she had abandoned in speaking to Harcourt, but which she now instinctively resumed.

There was a mutual inclination of the head; then Ruby sank back, languidly, on the fauteuil from which she had risen; other guests came up, and the young men moved away.

In doing so they fluttered from group to group, paying a compliment here and making an inquiry there; welcome to all, as handsome and eligible young men usually are, yet attaching themselves to none. For it was long before they took chairs, and when they did there was not wanting an interchange of significant glances among those who watched the proceeding.

The party they joined consisted of three persons—a gentleman beyond the prime of life, a lady in advanced youth, say fifty or thereabouts, and a second lady yet lingering on the confines of girlhood. To this second lady the first stood in the relation of aunt, the gentleman in the yet closer relation of father. Which regarded her with the greater pride it would be difficult to say; but while the one could not conceal the feelings his affection prompted, the other felt it her duty to adopt a frigidly of tone the better to enable her to sustain the part of duenna to her attractive niece.

And in truth, Eva Knowles needed some such guardianship as her aunt Effra exercised over her. She was beautiful, high-spirited, and full of attractive qualities. Moreover, her father, Edgar Homersham Knowles, whose name had grown familiar to the public ear in connection with political business, was reputed to be a rich man. Eva, therefore, be sure, was not wanting in admirers, and hence the significant looks when Harcourt and his companion joined the little circle.

Their doing so was not lost on Ruby Framlingham. From her position near her father, she could see distinctly all that passed; but it gave her no uneasiness, for the young and generous are unsuspecting.

Moreover, she had strong reason to believe that Edmund Harcourt loved her.

He had never told her so in words, but his attentions had been most marked. Of all who visited the house, he had been the most attentive. By unwearied assiduity and studied attentions he had won her heart. She believed him to be the most chivalric of men—high and honourable, true and devoted. That he had never given expression to his devotion only raised him in Ruby's estimation. She attributed his silence to a natural delicacy and a passion all the more intense from the tardiness with which it found expression. Each time he came her heart throbbed with joyous anticipation. "He will avow his affection to-night," she would say with a tremulous flutter, an ecstasy of joyous anticipation that well-nigh overcame her.

This night more especially she had anticipated the avowal. The time seemed to have come when it must be made, and she half-dreaded the possible chance which might throw them together, so that she must listen to the words she felt convinced his lips were ready to speak.

The night dragged on. The rooms grew crowded to suffocation point. The opera soprano was succeeded by an opera tenor, and vocal pyrotechnics gave place to instrumental displays of the same order, only infinitely more excruciating. Politics, brought in fresh with the cold air, by excited M.P.s, invaded the hearth, and overwhelmed Framlingham Brothers like a foaming billow. By degrees, Ruby edged herself away; joined nobodies in nothingless conversations; gushed with gushers; trifled with triflers; and took a becoming interest in people and things about whom and which she knew nothing and cared nothing, out of polite consideration for those who knew and cared as little, but felt it necessary to have something to talk about.

During this interval Edmund Harcourt had quitted the Knowles party, and Ruby had more than once encountered him; but always with Randolph Agnew. They were unusually inseparable. At each encounter a word or two—mere current courtesy—had passed be-

tween them, and each time Ruby's face had flushed, and she had experienced a fainting sensation.

"Poor fellow!" she thought, "he shares my own embarrassment."

Busying herself in playing the hostess, which she did with a child-like grace that was deliciously pleasing, Ruby found herself perpetually distracted from the one thought on which she would have been delighted to brood. She was compelled to make herself agreeable to all, to see to the comforts of all, and, in a word, to sacrifice herself to secure the success of the reception.

Weariness was the inevitable result.

The hot rooms fevered and tired. She longed for a moment's coolness and quiet. The opportunity offered. She glanced at her father—saw that political waves were surging high about him, and that he was thoroughly engulphed—and stole quietly from the rooms.

"It will be pleasant in the library," she thought.

Toward the library, therefore, she directed her steps. It was on the ground floor, and might be reached by the grand staircase. But that had been converted into a grove of exotics, and guests had availed themselves of it as a cool and fragrant retreat. To escape these, she sought a private staircase.

It led to a panel door.

She placed her hand on the inner bolt of this door, and was about to open it, when voices caught her ear. The library was not, as she had supposed, deserted; people were there conversing, and conversing in low tones.

Her impulse was to withdraw; but in the act of doing so her footsteps were arrested by what caught her ear.

The Man in the Open Air.

THOSE who have enjoyed the liberty of being out in the open air during the last two or three weeks ought to be entitled to an appointment from the Meteorological Society, or a Fitzroy Medal, if there ever should be one, so great must have been their experience of the rapid changes of the weather, if it did not altogether dodge their intellect and outrun their mental notes. Snow served up with thunder and lightning, hail garnished with gleams of sunshine, rain which refused to come down "slantingdicular," and wind which in its whirligigs might have been utilized in making corkscrews, were amongst the phenomena which succeeded each other, either in rapid sequence, or went in for it with a will altogether hurly-burlyish. We once upon a time had the conceit to consider ourselves weatherwise; we now, in our matured wisdom, have come to the conclusion that we are otherwise.

When a fellow, as Dundreary would have it, "sees with his own eyes" flakes of snow not only travelling in a direct horizontal course, but flying skyward amidst their frolicsome fellows, like feathers beaten from a bolster, he may well rub his optics, and ask whether Mother Earth is picking her geese instead of the fabulous old crone in the skies. But when wind, rain, hail, snow, and sleet—not to say anything of that insidious mist whose home is supposed to be only in the Scotch mountains—make a trip, like a canny body, south, and

insidiously surround us with a damp winding-sheet, is it not that which "a fellow cannot understand"—or, indeed, stand at all?—particularly if that boisterous larking chap, Æolus, makes a teetotum of you at every corner, which you are jamming your lugger well home to leeward, to hug.

But such weather does not last, any more than an Easter egg—which, by the bye, is an old institution suffering a recovery—the presentation of which is a little harmless game so long as it does not suggest, in its practical acceptance, anything of chicken-hazard. Apropos of eggs, there are some stories told about them that, in the negative vernacular of the present day, are "not so bad." Let us see—there is one which shows the contradiction of our English language, for an egg under-boiled is the same as an egg over-boiled—it is hardly done. Then we are told that no Englishman ought to eat a French egg, as he loses his nationality when he ceases to "scorn the foreign yoke." Again, we are seriously desired not to teach our grandmothers to suck eggs, as if that was the method by which our respectable ancestors obtained longevity. A Dutchman was accused of wastefulness at a public breakfast, in demolishing a few dozen eggs in a trice by merely eating the yolk and leaving the albumen. He, however, defended himself with some reason when he pleaded that the red of the egg was the meat, and did him "much goot," but the white was "de feathers," and he was not going to make a "bed-pillow" of his stomach.

But perhaps the best story regarding eggs is of American origin. Two egg dealers—the one making a little income, the other every year a loser by the sale of his poultry produce—were chatty over the state of the market, the one cheerfully, the other in gloom. The latter asked the former how he contrived to get on, and he, upon striking a bargain, agreed to let the unfortunate egotist into the secret. Upon showing him his fowls' nests, the visitor could see nothing that differed from his own; but upon the proprietor picking up a stone and laying it on a nest, the stone by its weight depressed a ledge upon which the nest rested, and rolled into a receptacle beneath, the nest again assuming its apparently permanent position.

"Well, what of that?" asked the spectator.

"Why, don't you see?—when any of my fowls lay an egg they are as precious curious as others, and turns round in their conceit to look at their precious deposit; and when they finds there's no egg there, they sits down and lays another."

The observer was perfectly dumbfounded, and determined at once to look round and do likewise. But, going out of the premises, he remarked—

"I've long noticed, old chunk, that your male roosters never crow and kick up a row like mine do."

"Why should they? Their pride is taken out of them, they never see no eggs, and in course they has nothing to cackle over."

Who is it compares an egg to meat packed in the neatest form? How few eat an egg properly! Not one out of ten can be entrusted with an egg, particularly if well cooked, without slobbering it while in what ought to be the simple office of enjoyment. The best way—(and here we do not wish to revive the old classic quarrel of which end is the most fit to begin at—we prefer, however, the broader, and follow the hint from the shape of the spoon)—yes, the best way, in our opinion, is to strike

the egg sharply with a table knife, then cut off the top cleanly (there are instruments now for this purpose), and having your bread and butter or toast ready, cut into thin "ladies' fingers," the salt—mixed with pepper, if preferred—on the side of your plate, dip one of your ladies' fingers into the latter, and then into the egg, giving it a slight turn or two at first, not to spill the precious contents, and so on until the last.

But if you are a connoisseur in eggs, never trust their boiling to any but your own hand. To do this to perfection, have either the urn or the kettle ready; let the water be boiling; then, first warming a jug or open-mouthed vessel, fill it with boiling water, and place the egg with a table spoon gently to the bottom. In this way you will never get an egg overdone, although, perhaps, an extra half-minute more than usual may be necessary for the cooking. The white and red are, moreover, somewhat agreeably mixed together; although your servant may perhaps be deprived of that customary game of substituting eggs for coppers, and playing at chuck-halfpenny with the fragile ova half-way across the kitchen, hitting or missing the saucepan.

There is a curious contrast in the neglect and extreme desire for cleanliness in Scotland, which we have more than once remarked in our rambles in that glorious country. The natives always *wash* (rinse with cold water) their meat when it is sent in from the "flesher's." We agree with them, for after the handling by many it must need it; but eggs are brought to table with the most tangible evidences of the nest upon them, even to the adhesion of pieces of hay or feathers! It is advanced in excuse that—

"An orange, an egg, or a nut
We may eat after a slut."

Never was a greater fallacy. If an egg be boiled in offensive water, the egg will taste of it; and to go back to the custom of colouring the shells of eggs for Eastern offerings, the interior will be invariably found to partake of the outside. Indeed, to cover an egg with anything which will stop the pores of the shell may serve to preserve the egg as edible for a time, but it equally kills the germ, and thus renders the egg useless for a setting. With oranges, the practice of rendering the rind of the common description of orange smooth by steaming takes all flavour out of the fruit; and it is equally well known that to grease nuts is to hasten the decay of the kernel.

In a word, it may be said of very many things, animate and inanimate, that they breathe, and by meddling unnaturally with their outward encasement, you but entomb their contents and hasten their destruction.

The dry and wet rot with us, and the ants of the East, prove this, owing much of their destructive power to the mistaken care of those who, impressed with the notion of preservation, varnish or glaze the exterior surface of their dwellings and furniture, and thus provide a secure and impenetrable wall under which the insidious foe can approach without molestation or discovery; so that its occupation, and the consequent result of its habits, are not known until you lean upon your favourite escritoire, stumble upon the treacherous stair, or attempt to move some unwieldy wardrobe, to realize the cruel fact that "all is dust."

A Curious Lingo.

"YOU wan-che one pe-sze boat?" What visitor to Hong Kong will not remember this pigeon-English greeting, as the anchor is let go with a whirr and a splash into the still waters? We say pigeon-English, for as such is this gibberish known; but as pigeon in Chinese really means business, it is clearly a misnomer; and we are pleased to remark that at last the English residents are beginning to be ashamed of making use of such a wretched jargon. It was solely brought into use by their own indolence, or a strange unwillingness to make themselves acquainted with even a smattering of the language spoken by the people with whom they were destined to live, and with whom they were brought into daily contact. Now, however, that British merchants in China have awakened to the necessity of eradicating the wretched admixture of Chinese and English, grammars, dictionaries, and vocabularies of every description in the local dialects are finding their way into houses which before knew them not; and an example is being set by masters and mistresses of communicating their wants and wishes in Chinese.

Now that the thin edge of the wedge is thus inserted, it is devoutly to be hoped that it will be driven home, and creating such a fissure as will utterly preclude the possibility of the future commingling of such objectionable elements of intercommunication, and destroying the jargon that has hitherto obtained. To assist in the gradual extinction of this pigeon-English, a generation of Chinese is growing up who have studied English at the schools established at Hong Kong, and also at the treaty ports, and who can now speak our language, if not fluently, yet grammatically. There are thus bright prospects, and with such forces at work its days are numbered; and although it is too early to say it has expired, and to add *requiescat in pace*, yet its extinction is, we may confidently assert, certain; but before it has quite disappeared, it may perhaps be interesting to our readers to give them a slight outline of its origin, and a few specimens of the rubbish our countrymen are talking in China, together with its characteristics.

In the first place, this pigeon-English is a compound of English and Portuguese, with a *souffçon* of Chinese idioms; and when we add that in but a very few instances a correct pronunciation of either of these languages is given, the effect may be imagined, but it most assuredly cannot be described. A few specimens of this lingo have found their way into English literature—for example, the parodies on "Excelsior" and "My name is Norval," which respectively commence, "That mighty time begin, chop-chop," and "My name belongey Norval;" and although these lines are childish and absurd, yet they are an improvement on pigeon-English, pure and simple, which can only be found in the native vocabularies published for the benefit of compradors and domestics entering the service of the English.

These vocabularies consist of a volume of about fifteen pages, entitled "A Vocabulary in use amongst the Red-Haired People;" its outer cover being adorned with a full-length portrait of one of the red-haired race, dressed in the costume of the Georgian period, in breeches and stockings, and armed with

stick and sword. The author commences with the English numerals, and does not stumble over one and two; but three proves a stumbling-block, his nearest approach being "te-le," the "r" presenting an insuperable difficulty. Six becomes "sik-sze," and seven "sam." He gives a Hibernian twang to ten, which he pronounces "tin;" "lim" does duty for eleven, "tui-lip" for twelve, "toonte" for twenty, "one hantoon" for a hundred, and for a thousand "one taoushan."

In Chinese, there is always inserted between the numeral and the substantive to which it applies a word which it is customary to call a classifier, since it points to the kind of object represented by the substantive; thus, instead of saying "two knives," a Chinaman's expression would be, "two to-be-held-in-the-hand knives;" or instead of "a table," he would say, "one length table." These various classifiers the authors of pigeon-English have melted down into one word, "piece." The Chinese equivalent of one indefinite article is "one pe-sze," while for "a knife" the expression would be, "one pe-sze mai-fo."

Strange confusions have arisen from the use in Chinese of the verb "to have," which is pronounced "hap." "Not at home" would be expressed by "No hap," and a death is announced by "hap tai," that is, "has died." "Fashionable" becomes "hap fa-sze" (fashion); "to be busy," "hap pigeon;" and "to be at leisure," "hap tim."

The most frequent expressions in these vocabularies are those relating to sailors. "A young officer" is a "mit-chi-man" (midshipman); "a second mate," a "sik-kan-mit;" "a sailor" is a "say-le-man." About military ranks less is known. "Sho-che-man" (soldier-man) is the only equivalent of a military officer, and is held to include all ranks, from the field marshal to the drummer boy; the only distinction recognised in this service being the "kan-a-man," or "artilleryman." It is descriptive of the state of foreign society in China to find that "a wealthy man" is translated into a "machin" (merchant).

The relations of life bear strange and unusual guises in pigeon-English. A wife speaks of her spouse as her "ha-sze-man," and he of her as his "wai-fo." A friend is a "fo-lin," here the "r" is again a puzzle; an uncle is a "young-ke;" ready money is "nip-te-ka-she," and so on.

To enable him to converse with his future English master, the would-be servant should make himself acquainted with such common phrases as "ting-ke" (thank you), "how mut che ka-she" (how much cash), "ko aoa sai" (to go out), "ko sit-te" (to go into the city), or "ko hom" (to return home); and he is given to understand that when his master says to him "I ko she-lip," that he is going to sleep; or that if he receive the order "No sze-pik-ke," he is not to speak. The Portuguese element in the jargon is noticeable in words such as "man-te-lin" (mandarin), "pa-te-le" (for padre, priest), and "sa-pe" (saber, to know).

These few specimens are sufficient to show the grotesque absurdity of pigeon-English. But its absurdity is not its worst feature. Its general use among foreigners at the ports has tended to create an impassable gulf between them and their Chinese neighbours, thus preventing the one from gaining any intelligent information about the other.

Bird Merchants in Java.

THE sale of birds forms—as shown in our illustration—a branch of employment for some of the juvenile population of the island of Java, but the group of children gathered round the cage in which

well-proportioned limbs give one the idea of little bronze statues. They are, as a rule, both handsome and intelligent. Sometimes the hair is cut quite short; sometimes the head is shaved, except just in front, allowing one long tress to fall over each temple, reaching down to the cheek. Their black eyes are ex-



MALAY CHILDREN.

are confined the little prisoners destined to be sold for a few pence are not all of pure Malay blood. The features of two of the party betray a mixed descent, and their physiognomy has a more severe expression than the ordinary Javan type.

Malay children seldom wear any clothing, and their

pressive, and generally have a mild expression. They have large faces, the nose being flat, and the lips very thick. When the little girls are dressed, they wear a long robe like the women; the boys, on the contrary, wear it short. Both have feet and head bare. On grand occasions, the boys wear drawers of some brilliant colour.

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—CORRESPONDENCE.

IT never struck Richard that some of his behaviour was verging on the Quixotic. His only thought now was that he was degraded from his high estate, and that the woman whom he had loved with all his heart—did love still—had turned from him in his poverty and distress.

At such times men are not disposed to fairly analyze the motives of others; and Richard was anything but an unbiassed judge, as he knit his brow, told himself that he had the fight to begin now, and determined to take help from no one who had known him in his prosperity.

With this feeling strong upon him, he dismissed the man who had driven him over; and, to the utter astonishment of the St. Kitt's station-master, took a third-class ticket for London, and entered a compartment wherein were a soldier with a bottle, a sailor just landed, an old lady with several bundles, bound on a visit to her boy in London—a gentleman, she informed everybody, who kept a public—and the customary rural third-class passengers.

And then the long, dreary journey began, Richard making up his mind to suit himself to the company amongst whom he was thrown, and failing dismally; for both soldier and sailor, whose idea of enjoyment seemed to be that they must get helplessly intoxicated as soon as possible, took it as an offence that he would not "take a pull" of rum out of the bottle belonging to the son of Neptune, and of gin from that of the son of Mars.

To make up for this, Richard tried to be civil to a couple of rustic lasses, who received all his little bits of matter-of-fact politeness and conversation with giggles and glances at a young Devonian in the corner of the carriage, till his brickdust-coloured visage became the colour of one of his own ruddy ploughed fields, and he announced that "for sigzponce he'd poonch that chap's yed."

Hereupon the old lady with the bundles loudly proclaimed a wish that her "zun" was there; and ended by hoping that, if "this young man" (meaning Richard) intended to make himself unpleasant, he would go into another carriage.

It was hard—just at a time, too, when Richard's temper seemed to be angular and sore—when the slightest verbal touch made him wince. But he set his teeth, bore a good deal of vulgar banter with patience, and was able to compliment himself grimly for his forbearance during the long ride along that single line of Cornish railway that is one incessant series of scaffold-like viaducts, over some of the most charming little valleys in our isle.

After passing Plymouth, the old lady became so sociable that she dropped asleep against our traveller. The rustics had given place to a tall traveller; and the soldier and sailor grew hilariously friendly after replenishing their bottles at Plymouth. And so, fighting hard to put the past in its proper place—behind—the train bore Richard onward to his goal.

Just before nearing Paddington Station, Trevor took out his pocket-book, and the rugged, hard look upon his face was softened. He glanced round the com-

partment, to see that half of his fellow-passengers were asleep, the soldier drunk, the stout old lady with the bundles busy hunting for her railway ticket, and the sailor disconsolately trying to drain a little more rum out of his bottle.

By this time Trevor had grown weary of the long journey—so tedious on the hard third-class seats—in spite of his determination; and a sigh would once or twice escape, as recollections of his old first-class luxury intruded.

"I'll hold to it, though," he muttered.

And, determined to go on in his course, he opened his pocket-book, and drew from it a letter which he had received from Tolcarne. It was not long, but it sent the blood dancing through his veins, and nerved him for the fight to come. It ran as follows:—

"DEAREST DICK—What shall I say to you in this your great trouble? Can I say more than that I would give anything to be by your side, to try and advise—at all events, to try and help and comfort? Papa was very angry when your letter came, and read it to Aunt Matty; but let that pass, as I tell you only, Dick, that you have a friend in dear mamma, who stood up for you as nobly as did darling little Fin, who had been in unaccountably low spirits before. I tried so hard, Dick, to come to you—to answer your letter and scold you; but they would not let me stir. I dare not tell you what they said; you must guess when I tell you that I was a dreadfully disobedient child, and Aunt Matty declared that no good could ever come to a girl who set herself up in opposition to her father and aunt. Poor dear mamma was left out of it altogether. I say all this, Dick, for fear you should think I fell away from you in your trouble, and would not come to you as you wished; but my heart was with you all the time. And now, Dick, darling, to be more matter-of-fact, what is all this to us? You could not help it; and whether you are Richard Trevor or Richard Lloyd by name, how does it alter you in the eyes of her to whom you said so much? Dick, you don't know me, or you would never have sent me that cruel letter, so full of your dreadful determination. Oh, Dick, do you think—can you think—I wish to be free? You taught me to love you, and you cannot undo your work. For shame, to write in that desponding tone because of this accident. It was very wicked and dreadful of Mrs. Lloyd, but you could not help it; and now you have so nobly determined to make restitution to poor Humphrey, let it all go. My Dick only stands out more nobly than ever. You have your profession, sir—go back to that, and they will only be too proud to have you; but don't go long voyages, or where there are storms. I lay awake all night listening to the wind, and thinking how thankful I ought to be that you were ashore, Dick, and all the time I felt prouder than ever of my own boy. Oh, Dick, never talk to me of freedom! Nothing can make me change. Even if I saw with my own poor little crying eyes that you cared for me no more, I could not leave off loving; and, dear Dick—dearest Dick—don't think me bold and unmaidenly if I say now what I should not have dared to say if you had not been in trouble. Dick, recollect this—that there is some one waiting your own time, when, rich or poor, you shall ask her to come to you, when and where you will, and she will be your own little wife—

"TINY."

"P.S.—Fin has looked over my shoulder, and read all this as I wrote it; and she says it is quite right, besides sending her dear love to brother Dick."

Trevor's face went down on his hands as he finished, his face was very pale, and a strange look was in his eyes as he re-perused the note.

"God bless her!" he muttered. "I will do something, and I believe she will wait for me; but I can't drag her down to share my poverty. But there, I won't curse it, when I see how it brings out the pure metal from the fire. I can't go back to the sea, though. Pooh! what chance have I—a poor penniless servant's son—how should I get a ship? Why, my rank has been obtained by imposture."

The rugged, hard look came back, but the sight of an enclosure once more smoothed his forehead.

"Here's dear little Fin," he said to himself. "Well, after all, it's very sweet to find out how true some hearts can be."

Saying this to himself, he opened and read a little jerky scrawl from Fin:—

"MY OWN DEAR BROTHER DICK—I sent you a message by Tiny, but I thought I'd write too, so as to show you that little people can be as staunch as big. Never mind about the nasty money, or the troublesome estate—you can't have everything; and I tell you, sir, that you've won what is worth a thousand Penreifes—my darling little Tiny's heart—you great, ugly monster! Dear Dick, I'm so sorry for you, but I can't cry a bit—only pat you on the back and say, 'Never mind.' I'll take care of Tiny for you, in spite of Aunt Matty—a wicked old woman!—for if she didn't look up from a goody-goody book, and say that she'd always expected it, and she was very glad. Ma sends her love to you, and says she shall come across to Penreife to see you, the first time papa goes over to St. Kitt's. She would come now, only she wants to keep peace and quietness in the house. They're against you now, but it will soon blow over. If it don't, we'll win over Aunt Matty to our side by presenting her with dogs. By the way, Pepine has a cold: he sneezed twice yesterday, and his tail is all limp. Good-bye, Dick.—Your affectionate sister,

"FIN REA."

Richard's eyes brightened as he read this, and then carefully bestowed it in his pocket-book.

He then took out and read again the letter that had come by post:—

"MY DEAR OLD DICK—Had yours and its thunderclap. Gave me a bad headache. Hang it all! if it's true, what a predicament for a fellow to find out that he's somebody else—'Not myself at all,' as the song says! But you have possession, Dick; and, speaking as a lawyer, I should say, let them prove it on the other side. Don't you go running about and telling people you've no right to the property; for, after all, it may only be an hallucination of that old woman's brain. What a dreadful creature! Why, if she isn't your mother—and really, I think she can't be—I should feel disposed to prosecute her; and I should like to hold the brief. Don't be in too great a hurry to give up, but, on the contrary, hold on tight; for that's a fine estate, and very jolly, so long as you could keep off the locusts. On looking back, though, there are a

good many strange things crop up—the wonderful display of interest in dear Master Dick, and all the rest of it. Looks bad—very bad—and like the truth, Dick. But, as I said before, legally you've got possession, and if I can help you to keep it—no, hang it, Dick! if the place isn't yours, old boy, give it up. There, you see how suitable I am for a barrister. I could never fight a bad cause. But, as I said before, give it up, every inch of it. I wouldn't have my old man Dick with the faintest suspicion of a dirty trick in his nature. Cheer up, old fellow, there's another side to everything. That Sybaritish life was spoiling you. Why, my dear boy, you've no idea how jolly it is to be poor. Hang the wealth! a fico for it! Come up and stay with me in chambers, while we talk the matter over, and conspire as to whether we shall set the Thames on fire at high or low water, above bridge or below. Meanwhile, we'll banquet, my boy, feast on chops—hot chops—and drink cold heady beer out of pewters. Ah, you pampered old Roman Emperor, living on your tin, what do you know of real life? Setting aside metaphysics, Dick, old boy, come up to me, and lay your stricken head upon this manly bosom; thrust your fist into this little purse, and go shares as long as there is anything belonging to, yours truly,

"FRANK PRATT.

"P.S.—I should have liked to see Tolcarne again. Pleasant, dreamy time that. Of course you will see no more of the little girls?"

"Poor old Frank," said Richard, refolding the letter. "I believe he cared for little Fin."

There was no time for dreaming, with the bustle of Paddington Station to encounter; and, making his way into the hotel, he passed a restful, dreamless night.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—NEW LODGINGS.

RICHARD was pretty decided in his ways. Hotel living would not suit him now; and soon after breakfast he took his little valise, earned a look of contempt from the hotel porter by saying that he did not require a cab, and set off to walk from Paddington to Frank's chambers in the Temple; where he arrived tired and hot, to climb the dreary-looking stone stairs, and read on the door the legend written upon a wafered-up paper, "Back in five minutes."

With all the patience of a man accustomed to watch, Richard up-ended his portmanteau, and sat and waited hour after hour. Then he went out, and obtained some lunch, returning to find the paper untouched.

Sitting down this time with a newspaper to wile away the time, he tried to read, but not a word fixed itself upon his mind; and he sat once more thinking, till at last, weary and low-spirited, he walked out into the Strand, the portmanteau feeling very heavy, but his determination strong as ever.

"Keb, sir—keb, sir," said a voice at his elbow; for he was passing the stand in St. Clement's-churchyard.

"No, my man—no."

"Better take—why, I'm blest!"

The remark was so emphatic that Richard looked the speaker in the face.

"Don't you remember me, sir—axdent, sir—op'site your club, sir—me as knocked the lady down, sir?"

"Oh, yes," said Richard, "I remember you now. Not hurt, was she?"

"On'y shook, sir. But jump in, sir. Let me drive yer, sir. Here, I'll take the portmanter."

"No, no," said Richard, "I don't want to ride, I—there, confound it, man!"

"No 'fence, sir—I on'y wanted to drive a gent as was so kind as you was. Odd, aint it, sir? That there lady lives along o' me, at my house now—lodges, you know—'partments to let, furnished."

"Apartments!" said Richard, eagerly; "do you know of any apartments?"

"Plenty out Jermyn-street way, sir."

"No, no; I mean cheap lodgings."

"What, for a gent like you, sir?" said Sam Jenkles.

"No, no—I'm no gentleman," said Richard, bitterly; "only a poor man. I want cheap rooms."

"Raly, sir?" said Sam, rubbing his nose.

"Yes, really, my man. Can you tell me of any?"

"You jump in, sir, and I'll run you up home in no time."

"But I—"

"My missus knows everybody 'bout us as has rooms to let—quiet lodgings, you know, sir; six bob a-week style—cheap."

"No, no; give me your address, and I'll walk."

"No, you don't, sir, along o' that portmanter. Now, I do wonder at a gent like you being so obstinist. You didn't find me so, when you gave me three times as much as my fare for taking that lady home."

Richard still hesitated; but it was an opportunity not to be lost, and, before he had time to thoroughly make up his mind, Sam had hoisted the portmanteau on the roof, afterwards holding open the flap of the cab.

"It's all right, sir; jump in, sir. Ratty wants a run, and you can't carry that there portmanter."

"A bad beginning," muttered Richard.

And he stepped into the cab, the apron was banged to, Sam hopped on to his perch, and away they rattled along the Strand into Fleet-street, and up Chancery-lane.

"He's a-going it to-day, sir, aint he?" said a voice; and Richard turned sharply round, to see Sam Jenkles' happy-looking face grinning through the trap. "He's as fresh as a daisy."

The little trapdoor was rattled down again, for other vehicles were coming, and Sam's hands were needed at the reins, the more especially that Ratty began to display the strangeness of his disposition by laying down his ears, whisking his tail, and trying hard to turn the cab round and round, clay-mill fashion. But this was got over, the rest of the journey performed in peace, and Sam drew up shortly at the door of his little home, the two front windows of which had been turned into gardens as far as the sills were concerned, with miniature green palings, gate and all, the whole sheltering a fine flourishing display of geraniums and fuchsias, reflected in window panes as clean as hands could make them.

"Why, this would do capitally," said Richard, taken by the aspect of the place.

"Dessay it would, sir," said Sam, grinning; "but our rooms is let. But come in, sir, and see the missus—she'll pick you out somewheres nice and clean. But, halo! what's up?"

Richard had seen that which brought the exclamation from Sam's lips, and stepped forward to help.

For, about a dozen yards down the quiet little street,

Mrs. Lane was supporting Netta, the pair returning evidently from a walk, and the latter being overcome.

"Thank you—a little faint—went too far," said Mrs. Lane, as Richard ran up to where she was sustaining her daughter. "Netta, darling, only a few yards farther. Try, dear."

"She has fainted," said Richard. "Here, let me carry her."

Before Mrs. Lane could speak, Richard had taken the light figure in his arms, and, guided by the frightened mother, bore it to Sam's door.

"That's right, sir, in there," said Sam, eagerly—"fust door on the left's the parly. Poor gal!"

This last was in an undertone, as the young man easily bore his burden in—finding, though, that a pair of large dark eyes had unclosed, and were gazing timidly in his, while a deep blush overspread cheek and forehead.

"There," said Richard, laying her lightly down upon the couch, and helping to arrange the pillows with all a woman's gentleness. "You look weak and ill, my dear, and—and—I beg pardon," he said, hesitating, as he met Mrs. Lane's gaze, "I think we have met before."

Mrs. Lane turned white, and shrank away.

"Of course," said Richard, smiling. "My friend here, who drove me up, told me you lodged with him."

Mrs. Lane did not speak, only bowed her head over Netta.

"If I can do anything, pray ask me," said Richard, backing to the door, and nearly overturning bustling Mrs. Jenkles, who came hurrying in with—

"Oh, my dear, you've been overdoing it—I beg your pardon, sir."

"My fault, I think," said Richard.

And with another glance at the great dark eyes following him, he backed into the passage—this time upon Sam, who had carried in the portmanteau.

"If you wouldn't mind, sir," said Sam—"our back room here's on'y a kitchen; but we lets our parlour, as you see. There," he said, leading the way, "that's my chair, sir; and the wife 'll come and talk to you dreckly, I dessay. I must go back on to the rank."

"One moment," said Richard.

"There, sir, I don't want paying for a bit of a job like this," said Sam. "Oh, well, if you will pay, I shall put that down to the lodgers' nex' ride."

"They are your lodgers, then?"

"Yes, sir; and it all came out of that old Ratty when I knocked Mrs. Lane over."

"But the young lady?"

"Thanky, sir, for calling her so; that's just what she is."

"Is she an invalid?"

"Feard so, sir," said Sam, in a hoarse whisper. "I don't like her looks at all. But I can't stop, sir; the missus 'll be here, and I hope she'll know of a place as suits."

The next moment, Sam Jenkles was gone, and Richard sat looking round at the bright candlesticks and saucepan lids, hardly able to realize the fact that but a day or two before he was the master of Penreife, for what had taken place seemed to be back years ago.

His musings were interrupted by the entry of Mrs. Jenkles, who stood curtsying and smoothing her apron.

"Is she better?" said Richard, anxiously.

"Yes, sir, she's quite well again now," said Mrs.

Jenkles. "She's weak, sir—rather delicate health; and Sam—that is my husband—said you wanted apartments, sir."

"And that you would be able to find me some," said Richard, smiling.

"I don't think we've anything good enough about here, sir, for a gentleman like you."

"For a poor man like me, you mean. Now look here, Mrs.—Mrs.—"

"Jenkles, sir."

"Mrs. Jenkles. I can afford to pay six or seven shillings a-week, that is all."

"Then there's Mrs. Fiddison, sir, nearly opposite. Very clean and respectable. Bed-room and sitting-room, where a young gentleman only left about a week ago. He played a long brass thing, sir, at one of the theatres, and used to practise it at home; and that's why he left."

"That will do, I dare say," exclaimed Richard, who, in the first blush of his determination, was stern as an ascetic, and would have said yes to the lodgings if Mrs. Jenkles had proposed a couple of neatly furnished cellars.

The result was that Mrs. Jenkles went over with him to Mrs. Fiddison's, and introduced him to that lady, who was dressed in sombre black, held a widow's cap in her hand, and was evidently determined to keep up the supply, for there were at least six arranged about the little parlour into which she led the way.

Queer Cards.

CHAPTER I.—EVENING.—THE ROADSIDE INN.

A WET day in autumn. The roads, the fields, the dripping hedges washed into one dull, neutral tint, only a few shades darker than the lowering sky. Far away in the west, a sickly yellow streak fast closing in, as though the sun were shining through the crevice of an iron shutter. Scarcely a breath of wind was stirring to vary the monotonous fall of the rain by driving it into a brisk shower, or to relieve the stagnant air from the oppressive smell of dampness which pervaded everything.

There were but two passengers on the miry road, and they pushed on wearily, without stopping to note the surrounding gloom, though one of them, and he the most active of the two, cast an eye now and then at the murky sky, more from habit, as it seemed, than with any hope of the weather clearing before nightfall. This man was dressed in a half-seafaring costume, and wore a tarred sou'-wester on his head, while a small leather bag hung upon a stout cudgel over his shoulder. His straggling grey hair fell over a sharply defined face, deeply bronzed and furrowed; but he stepped out bravely, at the same time helping his companion, who clung to his sinewy arm as though he required its support, for he walked with evident suffering, and his thin, threadbare clothes, soaked with the wet, clung round limbs which looked feeble and emaciated. His pale face (though a strange, pitiful gleam of satisfaction played upon it, in answer to his friend's cheery voice) showed evident traces of want and misery too long endured.

"Take heart, man, take heart," said the elder, as they stopped for a moment to rest against a gate, and he

looked down a turn in the road. "I see a house yonder, with a sign hanging out; and there we'll put up for the night, and stay till you're stronger anyhow. I wish now we'd bargained for a lift in the carrier's cart; you're weak, sure'y. Come, come, I say," and he caught him in his arms, for he had fainted.

"It'll never do, this won't," continued he, as he untied his rag of a neckerchief; "to find him at last under a hedge, and then to leave him dyin' out here all night. What a country for a man to find himself in, and not a human soul within hail. Come, Richard, come!"

The man slowly opened his eyes, and lifted himself up to his feet again by holding to the gate.

"Leave me here, my good friend," he said. "I can't do it, I'm too weak to reach the house; go you and send me what help you can."

"Never to leave you, Richard, as I vowed to Heaven before my dear lady, never to leave you till we're at home beyond seas, while I've got strength left me. You're not much to carry, worse luck, an' so up with you. Here, I'll stoop low, so as you can get your arms well over my shoulders—now!"

He stepped out once more, carrying the helpless man upon his back, while the hot tears fell amongst the raindrops on his coarse pilot coat. Once arrived at the little tavern, which rejoiced in the somewhat ambiguous sign of The Pack, they found better shelter than its appearance had promised; at all events, there was a clean sanded parlour, where a bright fire burned cheerfully enough. Beside the fire, on a wooden settle, sat a man leaning on a thick, rough stick, while the only other occupant of the room looked vacantly out of window, watching the rain-drops as they fell upon the leaves in a little thicket of evergreens.

The old man placed his companion in a chair at a little distance from the glowing chimney, and after calling for some brandy and hot water, which he administered to him with a tea-spoon until he gave some signs of recovery, opened his wallet, and took from it two or three articles of rough clothing, such as sailors wear. The sick wayfarer was soon able to discard his soaked garments and to substitute these for them, while the genial warmth at last restored him, and he ate some of the home-made bread and cold meat, which were placed upon the table.

As is the manner of Englishmen, the other visitors silently regarded these operations until they were nearly completed, and it was only as the old man drew his chair to the fire and began to fill a short black pipe with some tobacco, previously cut from a roll with his knife, that he who sat by the chimney-corner said—

"A regular drenching night to be out in. You've come a goodish way, haven't you?"

"About ten mile or more, that's all," replied the old man.

"He don't look much up to the tramp; aint used to it, is he?"

"Well, he's been ill with a bad fever, and it's left him weak; but he'll be better to-morrow, may be."

"It's just the sort of life to kill any one that haven't good health and good luck, is tramping," added the man, who began to whittle at the end of his stick, by way of accompaniment to the conversation. "I've been at it near twenty year, and that's my opinion. What's *your* lay, now?"

"You're out of your recknin', mate, altogether," said the sailor, knocking his pipe on the hob; "we're only working back to town to go aboard ship, and mean to stay here for the night."

"Suppose we play a game o' cards," said the first speaker, drawing a dirty pack from his pocket; "there's four of us, and there's no likelihood of being interrupted here."

The sick man had started from his chair and covered his face with his hands, but his companion held him by the shoulder gently.

"No, no," he said. "I never touch them more—never, never!"

"Sit down, Mr. Richard," said the sailor, soothingly; "we'll keep out of it safe enough. You see, my friends, we've a good reason for steerin' clear of all games with those sort o' tools, and p'raps you'll excuse us if we look on. That's as much as we're equal to."

"Well, no offence, I hope," said the man on the settle, with a grim smile, which had something comical in its expression. "I don't know but what I've seen your pal afore to-day, and on the tramp too," he added, turning to the old sailor; "and I may as well tell you, master, that I'd as lief not play myself. I know you haven't got much to lose, and I know I haven't; and I shouldn't know how to play without cheating, for I know a trick for pretty well every pip. It's part of my business, don't you see, to *do* tricks."

And he took up the pack, and sent the cards streaming from one hand to the other with a rapidity that was sufficient guarantee for his dexterity.

"It wasn't any part of my meaning to represent that there wouldn't be fair play," said the old man, gravely. "I'd be sorry to hold off because I think myself more honest than other people, without telling 'em so; and I'm no such trump card for that matter. No offence, I hope, where none was meant."

"Not a bit of it," replied the other, sitting down and lighting his pipe. "All the knaves of the pack aint to be found walkin' in the high road. There may be some as rides."

The man who stood by the window spoke not a word, but his face grew dark as he smoked on for a few minutes in silence, while he who held the cards in his hand seemed brightened up suddenly, for he said—

"Well, I've seen plenty of tricks in my time, and I'm a knave myself, though I don't say anybody else here can boast of being one. I've often thought of it when I've turned up this little card, and remembered what first chucked me on the road, head first, as I may say. 'That's *me*,' I've said to myself when I've looked at him."

He threw the knave of clubs on the table as he spoke, and glanced round with curious gravity.

"If you've a story to tell about yourself, you may just as well tell it," said the silent man, with an unpleasant laugh; "and if I'm not mistaken, that's what you're coming to."

"Well, we might all do a little in that line, I dessay," retorted the other; "but the night's young, an' I *should* like to know something of what our seafarin' friend's opinions are first, as I'm naturally curious, or *inquisitive*, if that suits you better. I'd like to know *one* thing, and that is, how it comes about that he's going in company with our other friend there; for I know him well enough by sight if he don't remember me."

At a look from his companion the sick traveller nodded his assent, and all three disposed themselves to listen.

Table Talk.

Archæological Discovery at Kadikeni.

Archæological discovery on a small scale is, according to the *Levant Herald*, proceeding actively at Kadikeni. Men, women, and children turn out day after day on to the beach under the cliffs at Moæa Bay, where for some time past a large number of ancient coins, mostly Roman, have been discovered among the pebbles. As many as thirty have been picked up by one explorer in the course of a few hours. A few leaden ornaments, such as brooches, locketts, rings, &c., have also been found. It is uncertain whether these interesting objects were thrown up from the sea during the heavy southerly gales of December last, or have been washed down from the hillside by the rains. Most of the coins are of copper; but a gold one is stated to have been discovered. It is suggested that Dr. Schliemann, who is reported to have failed in his recent negotiations for the resumption of his excavations at Troy, might perhaps find it worth his while to "dig away" the hill of Chalcedon, in which many valuable relics of antiquity are undoubtedly buried. On the other hand, it must be remembered that this "digging away" of hills in search of "valuable relics of antiquity" may be carried beyond reasonable limits. There are the landscape painters to be considered as well as the archæologists; and many persons, with every respect for ancient relics, infinitely prefer natural scenery.

WE often hear the remark, "Ah, they manage these things better in France;" but as far as newspapers are concerned, we think, to use an American phrase, "we lick all creation." In proof thereof we give the following:—A criticism of Sardou's piece "Ferreol," recently published in the *Times*, was "wired" from Paris on the night of the performance. This was not over till twelve; and the critique had to be written, telegraphed, set, and printed by five next morning. By eight o'clock the same evening the *Times* critique was in the hands of the Parisians, whose own papers had no notice of the play till the next day—twenty-four hours later. This was "tall" work.

WE read of a singular discovery recently made in the Savage mine, Nevada—no less than the finding of five living eyeless fish, between three and four inches in length, and of a blood-red colour. The temperature of the water in which they were found was 128 degrees Fahrenheit—almost scalding hot. When the fish were taken out of the hot water and placed in a pail of cold water, for the purpose of removing them to the surface of the mine, they died almost instantly. In appearance these subterranean members of the finny tribe somewhat resemble gold fish. They are lively and sportive in their native element, notwithstanding the remarkable fact that they have no eyes, nor even the rudiments of eyes. Eyeless fishes are frequently found in the lakes of large caves, but their existence has not before been known in either surface or subterranean water.

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER III.—THE AVOWAL.

RUBY'S attention had been drawn to a murmured conversation, evidently proceeding from the library; and yielding to an uncontrollable impulse, she listened to what followed.

"I repeat, Eva," said one of the speakers, with tender earnestness, "that the happiness of my life—is in your hands. I love you. I regard you with an intensity of affection such as only strong natures like my own are capable of. I have done so since that night—you remember *that* night—when chance led to our meeting. That was the turning-point in my fate."

Those were the words Ruby Framlingham heard, and in the speaker she recognized Edmund Harcourt.

And the name he had used sufficiently indicated into whose ears they were poured. Indeed, what followed left no doubt on this point.

It was Eva Knowles who replied.

"You make me very happy and very miserable," she said. "I ought not to listen to you, because papa will never, never approve, and yet—"

"Yet your own heart throbs in response to mine? You do not, you cannot deny this! I read the truth in your eyes, in your agitation. Oh, Eva, Eva, say that I am not indifferent to you. Let me hear it from your lips—from your own, own lips!"

"Oh, Mr. Harcourt—Edmund!" was the impassioned rejoinder—"you should—indeed, you should not! Papa has other views for me, and I cannot act in defiance of his wishes. Besides, there is Aunt Effra!"

Something very like an imprecation at Aunt Effra's expense rose to the man's lips, but he suppressed it.

"No matter for her, for any one," he urged; "only tell me that you love me. Only give me the assurance that my passion is returned, and leave the rest to me. With that assurance all obstacles will be overcome, all impediments disappear. Surely, Eva, surely you cannot trifle with the sacred instincts of your heart; you cannot be false to yourself, cruel to me?"

"No," she answered, eagerly, "I cannot."

"I knew it. And you love me—you love me?"

"With my whole heart."

There was a pause.

Ruby, with her hand upon the door, on the other side of which this avowal was made, remained motionless as a statue. What she had heard had passed through her brain and through her heart, benumbing both. Stunned by the sudden discovery thus made, she thought only of that; not whether it was right for her to be there, not whether she should withdraw or disclose herself, only of the monstrous fact that the avowal she had expected had been made that night, in that house, in her hearing—and to another!

Edmund Harcourt did not love her.

That truth, thus forced upon her, came as the end of life has come to men in sudden peril. She realized it, and she realized nothing more.

For a time she was even unconscious that the conversation of which she had heard part was continued. The mention of her own name recalled her to a sense of what was passing.

"And you never loved Ruby Framlingham?" Eva was asking.

"Never!"

"Yet they all said you were engaged."

"No, Eva, I give you my word that nothing has ever passed between us, no syllable that could be construed into anything more than a passing compliment."

"I will believe you, Edmund," was the earnest response; "but you have visited here so much, and been on such terms, that it has been mentioned everywhere. And I'm afraid—"

She hesitated.

"Afraid of what?"

"Why, that poor Ruby thinks that you—I mean that she will be disappointed when she hears what has occurred between us."

"You surprise me, Eva," returned Harcourt. "Have my attentions been so marked? Has so much mischief been made out of the simplest courtesies? Society is incorrigible. But let us not think of that—of anything but our own happiness. You are my first, my only love. I bring to you a heart fresh as your own, and since you have confessed that the rapture which fills it finds its response, nothing shall mar or disturb its felicity. Oh, Eva, Eva, we begin to live when we begin to love!"

Ruby heard no more.

Convinced of the hollowness of these words from the lips of one whose attentions had compromised her, and who had left her no reason to doubt that she was the object of his regard, she determined to confront him in this moment of treachery and triumph.

Nerving herself to this task, she clutched at the door and flung it open.

The lovers, starting in amazement and consternation, beheld her standing there, white as marble, but with eyes blazing with indignation.

Twice she strove to speak, but her rigid lips only quivered. No sound came from them.

Her bosom heaved: the beating of her heart was audible.

With the action of one choking, she put her hand to her throat. Then hysteric gasps shaped themselves into articulate sounds.

"Edmund Harcourt—you—you—are—"

These words escaped her: no more.

As she spoke, the room swam about her; she threw up her arms in a vain effort to save herself, then fell heavily upon the floor between the astounded witnesses of her emotion.

CHAPTER IV.—OFFICE BUSINESS.

EVERY morning, except on high days at the Bank, or holidays at the Exchange—of which the almanacks gave due notice—Framlingham Brothers betook himself to his offices in Cornhill.

They were quiet offices in a great house of quiet offices, the occupiers of which made no display and a great deal of money. How they made the latter they best knew; for the blank wire blinds in the windows told nothing, and the little colony of names at the doorposts were not communicative. But that the money was made—and reputably made—was beyond all possibility of question.

The manner in which Mr. Hector Framlingham, in

his capacity of Brothers, transacted his daily business, was somewhat in this wise. Punctually at half-past ten he arrived in his brougham, in faultless City attire, his silky white hair surmounted by a hat which was a marvel of glossiness, and a choicely unobtrusive flower in his button-hole. Passing into his private office, he had a chat with Mr. Arthur Pembrose, his manager; if there were callers, he had chats with them; if not, he amused himself with his bank-book. At noon he strolled round to the Exchange, heard the latest jokes (all the "good things" in town are first heard there), and eventually strolled off with a friend to luncheon, which always consisted of the same thing—a plate of clear turtle and a pint of hock. Exchange again, more chatting, more joking; then back to the office, where the brougham was by this time waiting, a parting "Good day" to the manager, and—home.

It was very simple, very pleasant, and somehow highly profitable. And possibly it resembled in its main features the businesses which other City men find so exhaustively engrossing.

On the morning after the party in Arlington-square, a strange thing occurred.

Mr. Framlingham was late.

It had struck eleven, and the brougham was not at the door.

The manager, who was a young man for the post he held, was both surprised and nervously agitated. Perhaps it was because of his youth that he was unable to conceal his perturbation. He could not rest in his own room, but strolled again and again into the outer offices, in which the clerks were for ever adding up and carrying forward figures in big ledgers, with the monotony of soldiers at shot drill.

"Odd thing—very odd thing," he ventured to remark once to the chief of these unfortunates.

The wan clerk dropped a thousand and nine with which he was toiling up a long column, and looked up blankly.

"It is, Mr. Pembrose"—it was the chief clerk's privilege to use the manager's name instead of addressing him as "sir," like the under-clerks—"it is strange. Always so punctual!"

"Yes."

The clerk rounded his shoulders into the ledger again, recovered his thousand and nine, and resumed his toilsome course up the long column.

The manager returned to his room, leaned his elbow on the mantelpiece, and thought. He was a handsome young fellow, this Pembrose, with a face of singular refinement, and a manly figure and bearing. There was, moreover, the stamp of a gentleman about him—that "hall mark" which indicates good birth and high breeding.

His present position was evidently beneath him.

He must have felt this at times, but it hardly entered into the troubled reverie into which he fell as his hand supported his upturned chin, his eyes fixed on vacancy.

"I am getting weak and nervous," he muttered—"everything terrifies me. I cannot tell what lengths this Harcourt may go to secure his own ends. Even personal violence is not impossible."

He paused a moment, then asked himself, half aloud—

"Ought I to take Framlingham into my confidence thus far? Would my fears be understood, or my suggestions listened to?"

Again he paused; then started up with sudden energy.

"No, no! Not yet—not yet."

As he arrived at this decision, the head clerk knocked at the door and announced that the head of the firm had arrived. Immediately after, Mr. Framlingham entered the office. He looked ill and agitated. There was not the usual spruce glossiness about him, and the rose he wore had shed half its leaves.

"I am late, Pembrose," he said abruptly, as they passed together into his own room.

"Nothing happened?" the manager asked, with an anxious face.

"No, no; but my daughter—"

"Not ill?"

"Not seriously. A sudden attack last night. Fainted in the library."

Pembrose clutched at the table by which he stood, his face ashy in its whiteness, and beads of dew breaking out over his forehead.

"Fortunately, Mr. Harcourt was there, and he instantly got assistance; but Ruby has passed a bad night—a trying night. Why, what's the matter? Are you not well?"

"Quite, thank you—quite well," he replied.

But for all that he put out his hand for a chair, into which he sank heavily.

"You are *not* altogether right," Framlingham urged. "Your face is leaden."

"Nothing, I assure you," was the hasty rejoinder.

"It was, you say, in the library that Miss Framlingham was seized; she was there with Mr. Harcourt and—and other guests?"

"I don't know who else was with them; but somebody, I suppose. The party was too large."

"And the fatigue too great, no doubt?"

"Exactly. Ruby will be all right in a day or two, I dare say; but it has cost me a sleepless night. But now, what news?"

"None so pleasant as I could wish: a telegram announces the loss of the ship *Hannah*, assured by us."

"What, the *Hannah* lost? There goes twenty thousand at a blow!"

"If all is right."

"What! Is there some doubt, then—some foul play?"

"Not that I know of, but—there has been a fatality among ships heavily insured of late, which is, to say the least of it, suspicious."

He looked his employer full in the face as he spoke.

"You know more than you choose to say," was the rejoinder.

"No, I know nothing. If I did, my duty to the firm would compel me to speak out."

"Of course; and what if you don't 'know'?"

"If I do not know?"

"Exactly—if you only suspect. Are we not still entitled to be taken into your confidence?"

Pembrose hesitated.

"If my suspicions had any foundation other than in my own brain—certainly. But in this case—"

"They have not."

"Well—no."

Hector Framlingham gave a searching glance at the face of the younger man; then, apparently satisfied, suffered the conversation to drift into other business

channels, and soon after quitted the office, sad and dejected.

As he went, Arthur Pembrose leaned his arms on the table before him, and buried his face in his hands.

"They were alone in the library," he almost sobbed. "He had taken the dreaded step, he had spoken to her, and the delirium of her joy overcame her. As yet her father knows nothing of this, that is clear. And she? Would she listen to reason, would she be convinced? No, no! Fool that I am, that will not convince him, with what should I convince her? I suspect all, but I know nothing. It is impossible that I can save her."

The unhappy man indeed knew nothing, even of that about which he believed himself well-informed. It will have been gathered that it was his misfortune to love his employer's daughter, Ruby Framlingham, and it was his belief that in this love he had Edmund Harcourt as his rival. Hopeless as he felt his own passion to be, he would have regarded any suitor for Ruby's hand with dislike; but towards Harcourt he had reasons for entertaining special mistrust and animosity. And now, after hearing what had passed at Arlington-square, he jumped to the conclusion that Harcourt had proposed to Ruby, little suspecting that, on the contrary, he had offered his hand to Eva Knowles!

It was a natural mistake, but a fatal one for his own peace of mind.

His anguish was unspeakable.

It was intensified by the sense of its being a duty to warn Ruby, or to warn her father, that there were suspicious circumstances about Harcourt, and his knowing that it was utterly impossible for him to offer proof of any one of the suspicions he entertained.

This was his state of mind when the door of his private office—the private door by which he himself entered it—was slowly opened, and a smooth bullet head was thrust cautiously through the narrowest possible aperture.

"Sur," said a deep voice.

The young man started up in alarm, but immediately recognized his visitor.

"Joe Ember!" he exclaimed. "How did you come here?"

"Seen' the dore open, I hiked in," was the answer, as Joe, the son of the boatman Jacob, to whom allusion has been made, edged his way into the room, and stood twirling his greasy cap.

"You bring me news, then?"

"Rather. They was at it agin last night."

"You mean that the men your father rowed across the river as we stood under the lamp last night went again to the old house by the water-side?"

"Yes."

"You watched them there and saw them enter?"

"Heerd 'em give the rings an' all, just the same as afore."

"Was the password the same?"

"No."

"What was it?"

"'Foes!'"

"Well. They were admitted. What then? They stayed—how long?"

"A 'our or more."

"And you saw them quit the house, and return to the boat?"

"Which father rowed back again to Rotherhithe. I followed in the old boat, meanin' to make sure of 'em this time. But lor bless ye, not a hundred yards off they hiked into a keb as waited for 'em, and off they druv."

"And that's all you have to report?"

"Well, yes, guv'nor—that's all."

A reward commensurate to the value of the information was bestowed upon Joe, who was then dismissed with some further instructions.

CHAPTER V.—A VISITOR.

HOMES there are many, and happy ones, in the Grove, Camberwell. It is pleasant in the summer time, with its long avenue of trees, bright and sunny overhead, yet casting a grateful shadow. Even in mid-winter, when the trees are gaunt and bare, and the rusted leaves litter the road, it is not without attractions, as being something more than a street, yet with all a street's liveliness about it; and the Grove has a charming "family" air about it. All day the nursery piano is at work, and the trim nursemaid, with her restless charges, is a pleasantly familiar object. At night half-drawn blinds yield glimpses of fireside coziness, and through half-open windows are heard snatches of song suggestive of snug family parties with "a little music."

Yes, the Grove is a happy compromise between the lofty and the homely (for we keep our carriages, some of us, in this favoured region); but this happy compromise hardly extended to the first floor therein, of which Arthur Pembrose was the solitary occupant: it was not impressive, and it could hardly be termed cozy.

As he entered his drawing-room unexpectedly early on this particular evening, he shuddered. It was cold, it was full of smoke, and it was pervaded by the acrid pungency of the smell of burning wood.

The fire was being lit.

And the officiating vestal was there on her knees before it, blowing with her mouth in a forlorn attempt to incite the damp wood into a blaze. Hearing a footstep behind her, she started up.

"Lor, sir, what a turn you give me!" she exclaimed. "We didn't think you'd be 'ome this two hours."

That was his welcome.

Left alone, he stood awhile brooding over his loneliness and the desolation surrounding him. How happy were those denizens of the Grove whose coming was looked for minute by minute, whose footsteps were recognized afar off, and who were met at their gates by smiling wives, and little toddling ones eager for kisses! No one expected him: he was not wanted when he came.

And what a place it was to come home to! His eyes wandered over the acre of Brussels carpet, of no particular colour, that seemed as if it had never been new, and they had never tried sweeping it. He glanced at the maddening claw-table, never firm; at the sofa and the half-dozen chairs covered in horsehair, with that bluish bloom on it suggestive of hoar-frost; at the ponderous sideboard, and the wine-cooler underneath, in which wine had never been cooled within the memory of lodger. On the walls hung dismal pictures in begrimed frames: views of the Chiseldicky Hounds; a study in Mackerel; Joseph and his Brethren, in floss silk; and a half-length, life-size, of his landlady, with

cap border on end and starting eyes, as if seized in a moment of supreme terror.

"I might do better than this," he thought; "but what is the use? A lonely man is lonely anywhere. And to think that this Harcourt stands in my way, and blocks up the avenue to happiness to my life's end! God! I shall go mad!"

It was torture to him to think that Ruby Framlingham had accepted Harcourt; yet it was over that and that only that he brooded for an hour or more.

He had been seated at the table between two lights, in tall, plated candlesticks, worn to the copper, for no little time, when the vestal who had resented his early return entered and announced a visitor—

"Miss Framlingham!"

Had a spectre gathered into form out of the darkness and appeared before him, the amazement of Pembrose could not have been more intense, nor could his face have betrayed greater consternation.

There was so little light in the room beyond the glimmering circle in the midst of which he sat, that, though he rose and gazed eagerly towards the door, Ruby Framlingham was standing before him almost before he was aware that she had entered the room.

She was dressed in black, and a little veil hid her eyes and the upper part of her face.

"Mr. Pembrose," she said, holding out her hand frankly, and suffering him to press it with tremulous nervousness, "papa has been unfortunate enough to meet with a slight accident."

"An accident!"

"Yes; it is not serious. His foot slipped as he stepped out of the brougham, on his return home this afternoon, and he fell. The shock and a sprain will confine him to the house for some days."

"So that we shall not see him at the office?"

"No. But he is anxious that certain matters should receive special attention. The loss of the *Hannah* particularly disturbs him. You will see by these papers what his wishes are."

"They shall be attended to; but I am so sorry that you should have had the trouble of coming—"

"Not at all. These things were giving papa uneasiness, and as he wanted a trusty messenger, it was so easy for me to order round the carriage. By the way, I am forgetting part of my message for you. Some few words you had with papa to-day, suggesting foul play in respect of these insurance matters, have greatly perturbed him, and he is anxious that, should you hear anything—should you have the slightest confirmation of your suspicions—you will at once come to Arlington-square. He will see you at any hour."

"Thank you, I will not forget. I might have said more to-day, but I did not feel justified in troubling Mr. Framlingham with the merest suspicions."

To his surprise, his visitor abruptly laid two fingers of her gloved hand on his arm, and said, with marked earnestness—

"You will not trust me with those suspicions?"

"You!" he ejaculated.

"Yes; I am not like other girls. I have a talent for business. For years I have enjoyed my father's confidence, and sometimes he has acted on my advice. Had I been his son, it would have been my pride to have taken an active interest in his affairs; as it is—you smile—you will not trust me?"

"If I smile," he rejoined, "it is at the strangeness of your request. You ask me to place a business confidence in you which I am compelled to withhold from my employer."

"I do; but I promise, in return, to regard what you may say as in the strictest confidence. If it is a secret, it will remain a secret. I see—you still hesitate; you cannot trust me?"

"Not trust you!" he burst forth, thrown off his guard for a moment by the intensity of his love for her; then modulating his tone, he added, "With all respect, let me assure you that I would trust my life in your hands."

The Man in the Open Air.

WHAT are more universally loved than flowers? We never heard of man, woman, or child disliking them, although there may be here and there an exceptional prejudice against some one or other flower, as there are in yet more numerous instances against individual vegetables, animals, colours, scents, &c. To "budding, fading, faded flowers," there belongs in every heart a peculiar world of emotions; yet are they all allied by one common spirit—sadness, it may be, or joy, or peace, or trouble; but it springs still from one and the same source—a source welling far within the soul, and by some innate power embittering or sweetening for itself its own waters. How flowers overflow the earth with beauty and happiness, or deaden it in a blank, barren as the grave!

How evanescent when plucked are field flowers, dying in the hand that parted them but now from their parent stem! When cultivated they are not so tender, so reaping and careless of life, but seem to reward us by staying for days in their pristine beauty, to please and gratify—stalk, leaf, bud, and blossom all alive, water their only support; and where they rest or rear their heads upon our table, assuring us they belong to this bright and breathing world. How elevating, how refining are flowers!—and what consolation can be greater to the invalid than to glance from the couch of pain to the many-coloured group, and occasionally catch the faint, fine fragrance of some favourite blossom, moderating the pang of suffering by recalling past associations?

We wish we knew who wrote the following, but it hails from Boston, and tells, as only a woman could make it tell:—"Flowers are a delight to every one—to some, perhaps, merely for their beauty and fragrance; to others, independently of these acknowledged charms, for the varied pleasurable memories they reproduce and thoughts they suggest; and foremost of these is the assurance they afford of the exuberant goodness of God." The provision which is made of a variety of objects not necessary to life, and ministering only to our pleasures, shows, says an eloquent and learned author, "a further design than that of giving existence."

And who does not feel this when he looks on the hedgerow and the mead—

"Full of fresh verdure and unnumbered flowers,
The negligence of nature."

"Each flower," remarks another elegant writer, "as

it comes before us, arrayed in a religious light, seems lovely as the last; and we regard all the families of the field with one affection." Who would exclude the meanest of them from his love? Meanest! Coleridge says, "in nature there is nothing melancholy," and we know "in nature there is nothing mean." A dewdrop trembling in a happy little floweret's golden eye—is it not a work magnificent?

"To Shakspeare"—as Wordsworth pathetically said of himself—"the pansy gave thoughts that did often lie too deep for tears," else had he not made poor Ophelia say—

"There is pansies—
That's for thoughts."

"Pansy freaked with jet" is also one of the flowers which Milton culls for the bier of Lycidas. Yet in another mood, "Sweet Will" immortalized it by the name of "Love in Idleness," in his "Midsummer Night's Dream." It was held sacred to St. Valentine, who is the saint of the soft-billed birds, and not of the vultures; and heart's-ease is a familiar household word.

The white water lilies are, on some waters, now bursting into bud. We say some waters, as there are localities in which these beautiful "day-lamps" or "fairy cups" are very late. They are certainly amongst the most magnificent of our native flowers. They expand their blossoms in the sunshine, and the middle of the day only, closing towards evening, when they recline on the surface of the water or sink beneath it. The sinking of the flowers has been denied or doubted, but we have often verified it. The same circumstance is recorded of the Egyptian lotus from the most remote antiquity.

We were watching the deer, like melancholy Jaques, the other day, while they were drinking in Richmond Park, and were greatly impressed with that remarkable provision of nature which extends to all the deer and antelope tribes the *spiracula*, or additional holes for respiration.

The observant White of Selborne appears to have been the first in modern times to notice this fact, which has since become generally recognized, although he quotes a line from the Greek poet, Oppian, showing that the ancients were aware of this peculiarity. When deers are thirsty they plunge their noses, like some horses, very deep under water, and hold them in that situation for a considerable time; but to avoid suffocation, while their mouths and nostrils are thus stopped they can open two vents, one at the corner of each eye, having a communication with the nose.

No doubt these additional nostrils are thrown open when hard run. The lovers of the chase might quote this as an excuse for hunting the stag, as a special providence has from the first, apparently, anticipated their future needs. The asses at Malta have their nostrils artificially slit up, to give them more breathing room in that hot climate, and we know that large nostrils are necessary in a perfect racehorse.

If an orange or any strongly smelling food be offered to the antelope, it will apply the slits at the corner of the eyes to the fruit, and thus test its quality before accepting it. It will be thus seen why, when hard pressed, the deer so often takes to the water. In these cases a stag will be down in the water, with his horns flat on his

back, and but a small portion of the head above the surface—a position in which additional means of respiration are doubtless most necessary. Thus not only is the animal hidden, but, in the case of running water, the scent will be carried down stream, with a rapidity dependent on the velocity of the current, and by this means his pursuers will be baffled.

There is a singular appearance often observed in spring, which has excited many a superstitious terror in the minds of the simple country people, and in reality in the absence of rational explanation, is very striking. It is the print of footsteps across the grass of the fields, as though they had been footsteps of fire. The grass is burnt black in the footprints, presenting a startling contrast to the vivid green around. The common people have consequently concluded these to be the traces of the nocturnal perambulation of the Evil One, whereas they are those of some one of themselves who has crossed the fields while the night frost was on the grass, which at this season is very tender, and is as effectually destroyed by the pressure of a foot, in its frosty brittleness, as by fire, and with much the same appearance.

We have been out much, but as yet have not heard or seen the cuckoo. We had the pleasure early last month of observing the Kentish dotterel in a road on a common near Dartford, and were enabled to approach without disturbing it to within some ten or fifteen feet. This is a very rare species, and, like the Kentish warbler, is seldom seen amidst its once customary haunts. Its plumage (*Charadrius cantianus*) is most chaste and beautiful, exceeding the ring dotterel (*Charadrius maticula*) in the lovely and harmonious distribution of its colours. It leaves the inland country for the sea-shore in August, and is generally recognised under the common term of plover.

We have already started in the grassy fields several of those little balls of fat so dear to the gourmand's palate, the quail (*Coturnix vulgaris*). Its cry of "Wet my foot, wet my foot," is possibly very familiar to many who may not know that it proceeds from the smallest known and most familiar of our game.

Quail are so abundant at times in the cultivated districts, and come so close to the habitation of man, that in Ireland John J. Watters says that "in the suburban streets of the city we may constantly hear their pleasing call-notes." In Germany and Holland it is elevated to the dignity of an imprisoned favourite, and is caged and suspended from the windows of every class. In England we see them in poulterers' shops, crowded mercilessly together, with scarcely room to move, in low and narrow cages, awaiting the same enviable distinction as the ortolan—to furnish, as we have said, a luxurious morsel to the epicure.

During its passage across the Mediterranean, 100,000 are said to have been captured in a single day. So great, indeed, is their abundance, that in Sicily half the population turn out *en masse* to enact a novel Sicilian vesper upon the myriads of unfortunate quails arriving upon their shores; and so lucratively do they dispose of them, that the principal revenue of the Bishop of Capri is said to be derived from them. It is said to be the bird sent in such countless flocks to preserve the Israelites in the desert; and a tradition exists amongst the Arabs that these "salwa," as they are termed, had then no bones, and were eaten whole. The Koran,

borrowing from Holy Writ, says, "And God caused manna and quails to descend upon you."

It is not generally known that "the nightingale only frequents those parts of England where cowslips grow plentifully, and therefore is not found in Devon or Cornwall." During the period of incubation the male bird entertains its mate through *the day* with his delightful melody.

Still less is it known that the nightingale is a most inquisitive bird. Let any one, when he hears him thus "pouring forth his soul in harmony," stop in the road, and with his stick or the heel of his boot scrape the dust or dirt together for a minute or so, and then retire a short distance. The bird will have been watching the operation, and will immediately descend to the spot, probably in the hope of a worm or other food, as we see the robin—that bold and impudent feathered pugilist—hop round and round the gardener's legs, heedless almost of the worm-severing spade, and wholly intent upon the tit-bits it chops up for his gratification.

It is now the pretty, pert little blackcap first appears, and thrills and trills his tender and touching love-song, scarcely inferior, in a certain plaintive inwardness, to the autumn carol of the robin. The mysterious little grasshopper lark also continues to run whispering within the hedgerows; the redstart pipes prettily upon the apple trees—the blossoms of which, "snow mixed with fire," are now wooing the delighted gaze; the golden-crested wren chirps in the plantation, as she watches for the newly born insect; and, lastly, the thrush, who has hitherto given out but a desultory note at intervals to let us know that he was not away, now haunts the same tree, and frequently the same branch of it, day after day.

In a word, the glorious orchestra has commenced; and what with song and blossom, and "admission gratis," a brilliant treat is open to us on every side, at the expense of an hour or so loss—or gain—of time, and a short run by rail.

My First Elephant.

SOME years ago, in my first hunting trip in Africa, I had been tramping about for days through the hot sands, which I seemed to moisten as I walked; and at last, wearied out, we camped down for the night close to a pool.

I was in the land of dreams, and back in England, when I was awakened by one of my Kafirs, and sitting up, there was about the strangest noise of wallowing, spouting, and trumpeting I had ever heard. It was for all the world as if some great beast were playing with water, and kept saying "Poomp."

"Elfans," my boy whispered.

And we lay listening—I without the slightest desire to go and attack them in the dark; and at last, all becoming silent, I dropped again into that sound sleep enjoyed by the tired man.

The next morning, on seeking the nearest pool, the first glance convinced us that our ears had not played us false in the night; for there, deeply impressed in the soft mud, lay the giant footprints of several splendid bulls.

A careful survey round about soon showed us that

they had come down by the valley to the right, and, after drinking and splashing about at all the pools, had gone out into the low hills on the left; so, putting my best spooring Kafir on the track, we lost no time in starting in pursuit.

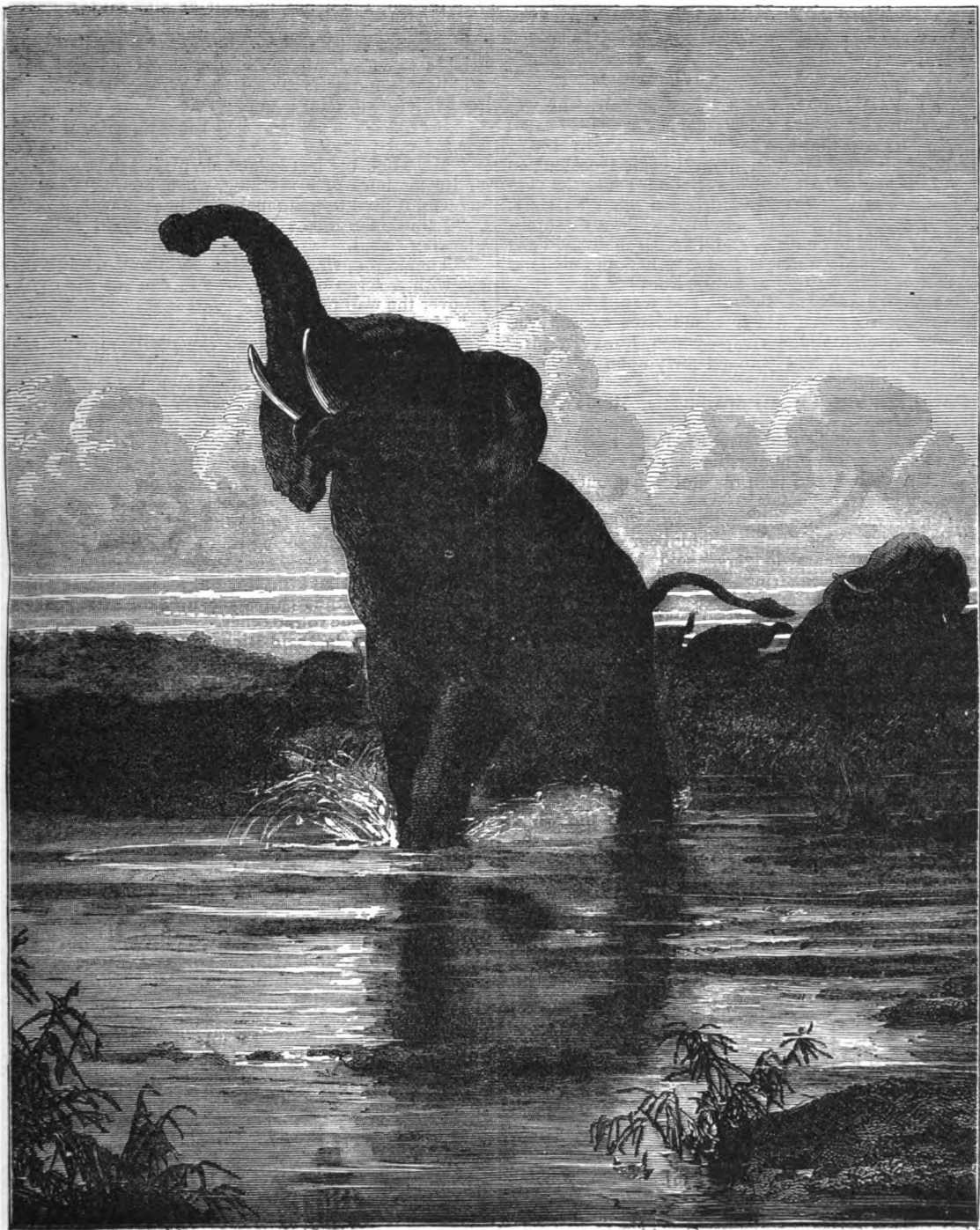
The troop, as well as could be judged, consisted of about ten or twelve bulls, amongst them three or four regular old teasers, with footprints nearly two feet in diameter. The spoor led us in a north-easterly direction, across low, undulating hills, and they had evidently taken it easy here, feeding about on the succulent "machabel" trees, which were very numerous; such havoc, indeed, had they committed, that it was easy to follow them, without looking for the footprints, just by glancing on ahead at the trees stripped of their bark, and the clusters of fresh leaves and chewed bark left along their track.

After following their spoor for about a couple of hours across this sort of country, it led us to some much higher and more rugged hills, and here they had ceased to feed, and taken to an old path, stepping it out at a brisk pace in single file. After following the spoor for about another hour along this path, it once more left it, and struck off again in the old direction across the hills, and, just here getting amongst a lot of yesterday's tracks, we had great difficulty in following it; but at length my boy, with the sagacity and perseverance of a bloodhound, ferreted it out, and away we went again.

About eleven o'clock we got into a patch of very thick, scrubby bush (what the Kafirs call "idoro" bush), in a deep kloof between the hills, and here we went along with great care and caution, expecting every instant to see the elephants, as I made sure they would not pass a place so favourable for their midday siesta; however, they went clean out of here, and up the steep hill on the other side. Arrived at the top, we looked down upon a large kloof, enclosed on all sides with steep hills, and covered with dense bush, thicker a good deal than that we had just come through; and as I looked I felt sure my friends were standing sleeping not many hundred yards off.

At this instant, glancing to the right, I perceived four elephants coming down the side of the hill a little on ahead (my boy afterwards claimed to have headed these, and turned them back towards the bottom of the valley); so I ran to intercept them.

I was just in time, and as they passed in front of me, at not more than forty yards' distance, in single file, I gave the last one (he having the finest ivory) a shot in the middle of the shoulder, but a few inches too high; however, it slackened his speed considerably, and he left the others. Quickly reloading, I followed; and getting to where the bush was a little more open, shouted behind him, "Hi, there!—woho, old man!" and, fatal curiosity or perhaps a wish for vengeance inducing him to turn, planted another four-ounce ball in his chest. He wheeled round immediately; but, his strength failing him, only walked a few yards, and stood under a tree; and, after receiving another bullet square on the shoulder, gave a fierce shake of the head, making his huge ears flap again, and, sinking slowly down with his hind legs doubled out, surrendered up his tough old spirit—looking for all the world, though dead, like a tame elephant when kneeling for people to ascend to the howdah.



"TRUMPETING."—(Page 126.)

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER XXXIX.—NOT MUSICAL.

MRS. FIDDISON was a tall, thin lady, who was supposed to be a widow from her display of caps; but the fact was that she had no right to the matronly prefix, she being a blighted flower—a faded rosebud, on whom the sun of love had never shone; and the consequence was that her head drooped upon its stalk, hung over weakly on one shoulder, while a dewdrop-like tear stood in one eye, and, like carbonic acid gas concealed in soda water, she always had an indefinite number of sighs waiting to escape from her lips.

She smiled sadly at Richard, and waved him to a chair, to have taken which would have caused the immolation of a widow's cap—which, however, Mrs. Fiddison rescued, and perched awry upon her head, to be out of the way.

"This gentleman wants apartments, Mrs. F.," said Mrs. Jenkles.

"Mine are to let," said Mrs. Fiddison, sadly; "but does the gentleman play anything brass?"

Richard stared, and then remembered about the last lodger.

"Oh, dear, no," he said, smiling.

"Because I don't think I could bear it again, let alone the neighbours' lodgers," said Mrs. Fiddison. "I might put up with strings or wood, but I could not manage brass."

"I do not play any instrument," said Richard, looking at the lady in a troubled way, as her head drooped over the cap she was making, and she gazed at it like a weeping widow on a funeral card.

"So many orchestral gentlemen live about here," said Mrs. Fiddison. "You can hear the double bass quite plain at Cheadle's, next door but one; but Waggly's have given the kettledrum notice."

"Indeed," said Richard, glancing at Mrs. Jenkles, who stood smoothing her apron.

"Yes," said Mrs. Fiddison, holding out the white crape starched grief before him, so that he might see the effect of her handiwork. "The last new pattern, sir."

Richard stared at Mrs. Jenkles, and that lady came to his assistance.

"Mrs. F. makes weeds for a wholesale house, sir."

"They ought to be called flowers of grief, Mrs. Jenkles," said the lady. "A nice quiet, genteel business, sir; and if you don't object to the smell of the crape, you'd not know there was anything going on in the house."

"Oh, I'm sure I shouldn't mind," said Richard.

"Prr-ooooomp!" went something which sounded like young thunder coming up in the cellar.

"That's the double-bass at Cheadle's, sir," said Mrs. Fiddison; "and, as I was a-saying, you'll find the rooms very quiet, for Waggly's have given the kettledrum notice. Mrs. Waggly said she was sure it was that made her have the bile so bad; and I shouldn't wonder if it was."

"And the terms?" said Richard.

"You are sure you don't play anything brass, sir?" said Mrs. Fiddison, looking at him with her head all on one side, as if to say, "Now, don't deceive a weak woman!"

"Indeed, I am not musical at all," said Richard, smiling.

"Because it isn't pleasant, sir, for a landlady who wishes to make things comfortable," continued Mrs. Fiddison, smiling at the cap—which she had now put on her left fist—as if it were a face.

"It can't be, of course," said Richard, getting impatient.

"Mr. Took, my last lodger, sir, played the rumboon; and sometimes of a morning, when he was doing his octaves, it used to quite make my brain buzz."

"I think the rooms would suit me," said Richard, glancing round.

"Thank you, sir," said Mrs. Fiddison, wiping one eye with a scrap of crape. "You can see the marks all over the wall now."

"Marks—wall?" said Richard.

"Ah, you don't understand the rumboon, sir," said Mrs. Fiddison, pointing with a pair of scissors to various little dents and scratches on the wall, as she still held up the widow's cap. "Those places are what he used to make when he shot the thing out to get his low notes—doing his octaves, sir."

"Indeed," said Richard, recalling the action of the trombone player in the marine band on board his last ship.

"Perhaps you'd like to see the bed-room, sir?"

"Would you mind seeing that for me, Mrs. Jenkles?" said Richard.

"It's plain, sir, but everything at Mrs. Fiddison's here is as clean as hands can make it," said Mrs. Jenkles, glancing from one to the other.

"Then it will do," said Richard. "And the terms?"

"Seven shillings my last lodger paid me, sir," said Mrs. Fiddison, drooping more and more, and evidently now much impressed by one of Richard's boots. "I did hope to get seven and six for them now, as there's a new table cover."

Richard glanced at the new cotton check on the table.

"Then I'll pay you seven and sixpence," he said.

"The last being full of holes he made when smoking," said Mrs. Fiddison.

"Then that's settled," said Richard. "Mrs.—Mrs.—"

"Jenkles, sir," said the cabman's wife, smiling.

"Mrs. Jenkles, I'm much obliged to you for your trouble," he said.

"And so am I," said Mrs. Fiddison, removing a tear once more with a scrap of crape. "My dear," she continued, fixing a band to the cap, and holding it out—"isn't that sweet!"

Mrs. Jenkles nodded.

"I think the gentleman wants the rooms at once," she said, glancing at Richard.

"Yes, that I do," he replied. "I'll fetch my portmanteau over at once."

"Oh, dear!" ejaculated Mrs. Fiddison—"so soon."

And with some show of haste, she took a widow's cap off a painted plaster Milton on the chimneypiece, another from Shakespeare, and revealed, by the removal of a third, the celebrated Highland laddie, in blue and red porcelain, taking leave of a green Highland lass, with a china sheep sticking to one of her unstockinged legs.

Half an hour after, Richard was sitting by the open window, looking across the street at where a thin,

white hand was busy watering the fuchsias and geraniums in the window, and from time to time he caught a glimpse of Netta's sweet, sad face.

Then he drew back, for two men came along the street. The first, black-browed and evil-eyed, he recollected as the fellow with whom he had had the encounter on the race day, and this man paused for a moment as he reached Sam Jenkles's door, turned sharply round, pointed at it, and then went on; the second, nodding shortly as he came up, raised his hand, and knocked, standing glancing sharply up and down the street, while Richard mentally exclaimed—

"What does he want here?"

Then the door opened, there was a short parley with Mrs. Jenkles, and the man entered, leaving Richard puzzled and wondering, as he said, half aloud—

"What could these men be doing here?"

CHAPTER XL.—BETWEEN FRIENDS.

A FORTNIGHT passed away.

It was a difficult matter to do—to make up his mind as to the future; but after a struggle, Richard arrived at something like the course he would pursue. He must live, and he felt that he had a right to his pay as an officer; so that would suffice for his modest wants.

Then, as to the old people. He wrote a quiet, calm letter to the old butler, saying that some time in the future he would come down and see them, or else ask them to join him. That he would do his duty by them, and see that they did not come to want; but at present the wound was too raw, and he felt that it would be better for all parties that they should not meet.

Another letter he despatched to Mr. Mervyn, asking him once more to be a friend and guide to Humphrey; and, above all, to use his influence to prevent injury befalling Stephen and Martha Lloyd.

His next letter was a harder one to write, for it was to Valentina Rea. It was a struggle, but he did it; for the man was now fully roused in spirit, and he told himself that if ever he was called upon to act as a man of honour it was now. He told her, then, that he never loved her more dearly than now; that he should always remember her words in the letter he treasured up, but that he felt it would be like blighting her young life to hold her to her promise. If, in the future, he could claim her, he would; but he knew that father—soon, perhaps, mother—would be against it, for he could at present see no hope in his future career.

But all the same, he signed himself hers till death; sent his dear love to "little Fin;" and then, having posted his letters, he felt better, and went to seek out Frank Pratt.

"He won't turn out a fine weather friend, of that I'm sure," he said, as he went up the staircase in the Temple, to be seized by both hands as soon as he entered, and have to submit to a couple of minutes' shaking.

"Why, Dick, old man, this does one good!" exclaimed Pratt. "Now, then, a steak and stout, or a chop and Bass, two pipes, and a grand debauch at night, eh?"

"What debauch?" said Richard, smiling.

"Front row of the pit, my boy. Absolute freedom; comfort of the stalls without having to dress. Nobody waiting to seize your 'Overcoat, sir.' Good view of the stage; and, when the curtain's down, time and oppor-

tunity to pity the curled darlings of society, who stand, in melancholy row, with their backs to the orchestra, fiddling their crush hats, and staring up at the audience through eyeglasses that blind."

"And meet Flick and Vanleigh."

"Who cares?" said Pratt, forcing his friend into a well-worn easy-chair, and taking away hat and stick. "Isn't that a lovely chair, Dick? I've worked that chair into that shape—moulded it, sir, into the form of my figure, and worn off all its awkward corners. Pipe?—there you are. 'Bacco?—there you are. Whiskey?—there you are. And there's a light. Have a dressing-gown and slippers?"

"No, no—thanks," said Dick, laughing.

But his face twitched as, after filling and trying to light a pipe, he laid it hastily down, wrung Pratt's hand, and then started up and walked to the window, to stand gazing out at the dirty walls before him.

Before he had been there a moment, a friendly hand was laid upon his shoulder, and Pratt got hold of his hand, standing behind him without a word, till he turned again and walked back to his seat.

"Don't mind me, Franky, I'm very sore yet."

"I know, I know," said Pratt, feelingly. "It's hard—cursed hard! I'd say damned hard, only as a straightforward man I object to swearing. But where's your bag, portmanteau, luggage?"

"Oh, that's all right," said Richard, lighting his pipe, and smoking.

"What do you mean by all right? Where shall I send for them?"

"Send for them?"

"Send for them—yes. You've come to stay?"

"Yes, for an hour or two."

"Dick," cried Pratt, bringing his fist down upon the table with a bang, "if you are such a sneak as to go and stay anywhere else, I'll cut you."

"My dear Frank, don't be foolish, I've taken lodgings."

"Then give them up."

"Nonsense, man! But listen to me. You don't blame me for giving up?"

"I don't know, Dick—I don't know," said Pratt. "I've lain in bed ruminating again and again; and one time I say it's noble and manly, and the next time I call you a fool."

Richard laughed.

"You see, old fellow, I'm a lawyer. I've been educating myself with cases, and the consequence is that I think cases. Here, then, I say, is a man in possession of a great estate; somebody tells him what may be a cock-and-bull tale—like a melodrama at the Vic, or a story in penny numbers—about a mysterious changeling and the rest of it, and he throws up at once."

"Yes," said Richard.

"Speaking still as a man fed upon cases, I say, then, give me proofs—papers, documents, something I can tie up with red tape, make abstracts from, or set a solicitor to prepare a brief from. I'm afraid you've done wrong, Dick, I am indeed."

"No, you are not, Franky," said Richard, quietly.

"Now, speak as a man who has not been getting up cases—speak as the lad who was always ready to share his tips at school. No, no, Franky; the more I think of it, the more I feel convinced that I have behaved—as I cannot be a gentleman—like a man of honour."

"Gentleman—cannot be a gentleman!" said Pratt, puffing out his cheeks, and threatening his friend with one finger, as if he were in the witness box. "What do you mean, sir? Now, be careful. Do you call Vanleigh a gentleman?"

"Oh, yes," said Richard, smiling.

"Then I don't," said Pratt, sharply. "I saw the fellow yesterday, and he cut me dead."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, and no wonder. He was talking to a black-looking ruffian who bothers me."

"Bothers you?"

"Yes, I know I've seen him before, and I can't make out where."

"Was it at the steeplechase?" said Richard, quietly.

"You've hit it, Dick," cried Pratt. "That's the man. Why weren't you called to the bar? But I say, why did you name him? You know something—you've seen them together."

"I have."

"Um!" said Pratt, looking hard at his friend. "Then what does it mean?"

"Can't say," said Richard, quietly—"only that it don't concern us."

"I don't know that," said Pratt; "it may, and strongly. But tell me this, how long have you been in town?"

"A fortnight."

"A fortnight, and not been here!"

"I have been three times," said Richard, "and you were always out."

"How provoking! But you might have written. The fact is, Dick, I'm busy. All that work that was held back from me for so long is coming now. I was a bit lucky with my first case."

Which was a fact, for he had carried it through in triumph, and solicitors were sending in briefs.

"I have been busy, too—making up my mind what to do."

"Then look here, Dick, old fellow. I'm getting a banking account—do you hear? a banking account—and if you don't come to me whenever you want funds, we are friends no more."

"Franky," said Richard, huskily, "I knew you were a friend, or I should not have come to your chambers for the fourth time. But what did you mean about Vanleigh's affairs concerning us?"

"Well, only that they may. You know they are in town, of course?"

"Why, yes; I met Van the other day. Flick is sure to be near him."

"Yes, as long as Flicky has any money to spare—afterwards Van will be out. But I mean *them*."

"Whom?" said Richard, starting.

"Our Tolcarne friends—Russell-square, you know," said Pratt, reddening slightly.

"No," said Richard, hoarsely, "I did not know it."

"Yes, they have been up a week."

"How did you know it?"

"Well," said Pratt, reddening a little more, "I—that is—well, there, I walked past the house, and saw them at the window."

"You've watched it, then, Franky?" said Richard, quietly.

"Well, yes, if you like to call it so; and I've seen Van and Flick go there twice. How did they know that you had—well, come to grief?"

Richard shook his head.

"I'll tell you. Depend upon it, that amiable spinster aunt, who loved you like poison, sent them word, and also of their return to town."

"Possibly," said Richard, in the same low, husky voice.

"Dick, old fellow, I don't think you've done quite right in giving up all," said Pratt. "You had some one else to think of besides yourself."

"For heaven's sake, don't talk to me now," said Richard, hoarsely. "The task is getting harder than I thought; but if that fellow dares— Oh, it's absurd!"

He stood for a few moments with his fists clenched, and the thoughts of Vanleigh's dark, handsome face, and his visit to the little Pentonville street, seemed to run in a confused way through his brain, till he forced them aside, and, with assumed composure, filled his glass, and tossed it off at a draught.

He was proceeding to repeat it, when Pratt laid a hand upon his arm.

"Don't do that, old fellow," he said, quietly. "It there's work to be done, it's the cool head that does it; drink's only the spur, and the spurred beast soonest flags. Let you and I talk it over. Two heads are better than one, and that one only Van's. Dick, old fellow, what are you going to do?"

Queer Cards.

CHAPTER II.—THE KNAVE OF SPADES BEGINS HIS HISTORY.

THE old man sat sucking his short, black pipe, and leaning his chin and grizzled beard on that brown paw of a hand, as though he still listened to the voice of the last speaker. It was not till his companions had twice reminded him that they were waiting, that he slightly changed his attitude, and, peering through the cloud of tobacco smoke with the same unmoved and stony gaze, said, abstractedly—

"Body-snatching was what I was brought up to."

Familiar as these men were with some sort of crime, and with all sorts of suffering, they looked at each other and moved uneasily, as though this particular experience was the one thing which they had not bargained for in their acquaintance with dishonesty. Nay, it seemed that the taking of a man's life was a much less startling occurrence than the appropriation of his dead body; but they were too much accustomed to the recital of lawless deeds to exhibit more than a momentary aversion.

The old fellow sat looking beyond his companions, through the low window, and into the dark coppice, where the shadows had fallen gloomily, and the rain-drops pattered among the leafless boughs, as though he saw a large book somewhere in the night air outside, and was reading from it in a low voice.

"Body-snatching was what I was brought up to, least-ways that was the trade my father followed when I was a child; and one of the first things I can recollect was his bringing home something in a long, dirty sack, that he and two other men took out of a light cart, and put into the back shed in our yard. I asked my mother what was inside, but she only fell a-crying, and asked my father not to leave it there, and to give up that sort

of work; but she only got a kick for her pains, and then all the men went out to the public-house, and left mother and me at home with half a loaf in the house and no fire.

"It was years after this, and I was about thirteen years old, when I heard of a place at Mr. Feene's. My poor mother had taught me to read a bit, when I wasn't out holding horses or going errands, and I used to go into a neighbour's that kept a coal shed at the end of our street to read the paper to her of an evening. So it happened one night that she told me Mr. Feene's cook had been there, and wanted a boy to clean boots and knives. Mother was only too glad to get me away, for I was to come home every Saturday night; and before I left her she gave me all the money she had—about two shillings, I believe—and told me never to let my father persuade me to go with him, but to keep honest for her sake. I remember crying all night nearly, for mother said she was dying fast, and I knew what a life she was likely to lead when I'd gone. I got to bed before father came home, and heard him swearing at something mother said to him, though I did not know what; then he went out, and I saw no more of him till I left Mr. Feene's employ, and this is how it happened.

"Mr. Feene's house was a handsome sort of place enough up by Highgate, which was a good deal more out of London than it is now. It was a red brick place that stood in its own grounds, and had a pretty garden in front of the drawing-room window. There were all sorts of out-of-the-way doors about in different directions, leading into the kitchen and outhouses, and they used to keep poultry and pigeons and all that at the back, with a gardener and his wife to attend to 'em and help in the house as well. When I could get my work done indoors, I used to like to go and see whether there was anything that I could do in the garden, and, after a time, the man used to let me dig a bed or two and plant out the slips for him; it was always my job to feed the fowls too, and I got to know them, and get them to come and feed out of my hand. There was only Mr. Feene and his daughter living there; she was his only child, cook told me, and her mother had been dead more than two years. It was some time before I saw my master, for he left everything that had to do with me to cook, and she always paid me my shilling of a Saturday night, just before I went home to see mother.

"The first time I met with the gentleman was one day when I was sent down to the livery stables to order a fly, for he was going out of town; and as I stood holding the door open, he came out under the porch, and called out to me in a regular temper, to 'come and put the luggage on the top, and not stand staring there!' I let go the door, and was going to take the carpet bag out of his hand, but he gave it a swing against my head, and sent me with my elbow through a window, and the smash of the glass frightened the horse so, that he went right across a flower bed on one side of the drive, and broke down a whole lot of rose trees. I shall never forget Mr. Feene's face as he pitched the portmanteau on to my feet, and told me to carry it out to the front gate, while the coachman got the horse round. He was a little, thin, dark man, with skinny, yellow hands, and all brown under the eyes; and though he didn't speak over-loud, every word he said was meant to threaten you, as if he'd said, 'If you don't want to be strangled,

just do this or that.' He had a smile on his face all the time, as though he was going to do something to you by-and-bye, and you could guess what it was. This was what I thought of him as a boy; perhaps I might think different now.

"I'd seen Miss Rose many times before that, for she'd come out of a morning as I was working in the garden, or perhaps come and watch me feeding the pigeons. At last she got to speak to me, and made out somehow that I could read a little; after that she lent me one or two of her books, and as I was always fond of reading aloud, I used to go through the best part of 'em to cook of evenings; but this was when we hadn't much to do, while Mr. Feene was away, after the time when he chucked the portmanteau at me. I'd managed to pick up a little writing somehow from some old copybooks of Miss Rose's, and she'd come down into the kitchen now and then (for I expect she was dreadful lonely, poor young thing), and tell me and cook some of the things she had read when she was out in Jamaiky, where they used to live, before her father brought her away to England. I know I used to listen to her descriptions of this place, and wish I could go and see it, for, by all accounts, it was as full of all sorts of splendid flowers and birds as an English meadow is of buttercups; but then it was her beautiful way of telling it, you see, as made it all seem like a romance out of a story-book. I used to get into a dark corner by the dresser, while she sat by the great kitchen fire, with her beautiful silk dress tucked up, and watch her as she talked to cook about all sorts of wonderful things that I'd never heard of before, nor cook neither, I expect. She was very little older than me, I should say, and I could have watched her great dark eyes for hours, as they used to look at them times, with the fine light dancing in 'em and flashing on her white face. I can't describe her; she never looked as though she ought to belong to this world. I can't describe her, because I can always see her. I can see her now, and it may be that my own time's near. There was never any company while Mr. Feene was away, so that we hadn't much to do after dinner in the autumn evenings except to talk; and Miss Rose used to come into the kitchen oftener and stay longer; but she caught me sitting doing nothing, and gave me books to read that she used to ask me questions about after. Good books some of them were, and others about history and stories of old times. Well, it happened that we were together one evening, she was sitting by the fire as usual, and cook was making a pie at the dresser, while I was answering questions out of a book that I had in my hands, when we heard somebody open the door quick, and before anybody could look round, in came Mr. Feene, with his own ugly look on his face, and a horse-whip in his hand.

"Oh! oh!" he says, almost under his breath, he spoke so softly; 'lessons, eh?' and he unwound the thong of his whip. 'Lessons are good things when they're of the right sort,' says he. 'Rose, just attend here while I give a lesson, and then that'll teach you not to spend your time with young scoundrels like this.'

He had no sooner said this than I felt the whip swish through the air and come down round my arms, as if it had cut through the flesh.

"So you must learn out of my daughter's books, must

you, you young thief?' he said, lashing me again; 'now I'll teach you a lesson out of *my* book.'

"Miss Rose had rushed forward to stop his hand, and, before he could put her back, the whip thong caught her cheek, and left a bright red spot there upon the marble white. I had scarcely made any noise before, but took the lash without saying a word, looking all the time to Miss Rose, as if she could tell me what to do; but I lost myself entirely when I saw her struck, and, catching up the heavy brass candlestick from the kitchen table, flung it full into his face, and rushed at him head first. I didn't know how it was that I got my hands into his neck-handkerchief, but I held fast, till my face was covered with bruises and my mouth full of blood. I should have held there till he had killed me or I had throttled him, but I felt a light hand on my arm, and Miss Rose unclenched my hands and stood between us. Her father was cursing, and would have set upon me again, but she turned round and said—

"You must go away now; I'm sorry for you, but not more sorry for you than you should be for me. It was my fault that you are in this trouble, but I can do nothing now. Go, for my sake,' and so she pointed to the door.

"I said not a word, but took up a book she had given me off the dresser, and turned to go away.

"Put that down," said Mr. Feene; and again the thong came lashing round me over Miss Rose's head, and cut me across the face.

"Coward! coward!" she cried out; and before he knew it, she snatched the whip out of his hand, and pushed it into the fire. He lifted up his clenched fist: I thought he would have struck her, and went back with a carving knife in my hand; but she stood there and looked him in the face without moving, and pointed to the red mark on her cheek. 'Once is enough,' she said, 'although you are my father.'

"He turned away and laughed, but looked like a beaten dog; and cook hurried me out of the back door, and, after putting a sovereign into my hand, told me she would see me at Mrs. Cormack's (that was the coal shed) the next night.

"For hours I prowled about the garden, listening every now and then at the kitchen window, or looking up at the house to see what room was lighted up; but I could hear nothing, and it was only just before daybreak that I could see a glimmer of light up in Miss Rose's room.

It came on to rain, and I crawled under a thick hedge close to the back entrance, and waited for daylight, in hopes of being able to hear something of what had been done. I couldn't sleep for the pain of my arm, where it had swelled from the cut of the whip, but felt very sick with a sort of stunned sensation in my head. I was in a doze, when I heard a foot coming along the gravel; and there was cook, crying and running along to the gate in the road. I caught up to her presently, and asked her what was the matter; but she seemed frightened at seeing me there still, and made me go before her out of the garden. Then I heard she was going for the doctor, not by Mr. Feene's orders, but of her own accord; for Miss Rose was like to die, and lay on her bed without speaking or moving. I turned towards home, but could scarcely walk; and when I felt for the sovereign I had had in my pocket, it had

got out somehow, and was lost in the garden, when and where I didn't know.

"All that day I lay down on my dirty bed at my father's place, and waited for my mother to come. There was nobody at home; but a little girl, belonging to somebody in the same street, told me she had the key, and that father always gave it to her in the morning now. When I asked her after mother, she said she believed she had gone down into the country, but she didn't know where.

"I got up late in the evening, and went to Mrs. Cormack's, taking the key with me. When I had waited a little while, cook came in. She couldn't stay, she said, and had only come because she had promised to see me; she might never see me again, for she was going away somewhere with Miss Rose, she didn't know where. The doctor had ordered her change of air, and they were going abroad, she believed, as Mr. Feene had put the house into somebody's hands to let it directly.

"Miss Rose had sent me a message, and had asked cook to come on purpose to bring it. This was the message—

"If you try to forgive my father, we shall meet again. When we meet, I trust you will be able to tell me all you have done since I saw you."

Table Talk.

THE "Domesday Book," compiled by order of William the Conqueror in 1085, was our first complete land census, though a tolerably correct annual poll-list had been established by King Alfred a couple of centuries earlier. This "Domesday Book" is still extant, and, we believe, in excellent preservation—the years which have passed over it having obliterated none of its contents, nor, we understand, even faded the ink with which it was written.

HISTORY has been lately repeating itself on a small scale by the appearance of a second "Domesday Book," in which the land proprietors are specifically enumerated. The number in the year 1085 was 54,813. Last year it was, exclusive of owners of London city property, 972,836—a vast increase. Half of the county of Northumberland belongs to twenty-six gentlemen, the Duke of Northumberland owning 181,616 acres, and the smallest proprietor of the number owning nearly 9,000 acres.

AMONG the many experiments of Professor Faraday was one in which he melted pure ice under oil of turpentine, and found that the liquid thus formed could be heated far above boiling point, and that the change of the liquid to vapour took place with explosive violence. For the success of this experiment the water ought previously to have been boiled, and then rapidly frozen in a perfectly clean vessel. This experiment gives a reasonable explanation of the explosion of a pail of water, or rather of ice, that we recently read of. The pail was being heated to thaw the contents, when it exploded, destroying the bucket, and severely injuring two men. Probably the water was covered with fat or oil before freezing.

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER VI.—THE COMPACT.

ARTHUR PEMBROSE'S earnestness impressed Ruby with a conviction of his sincerity. But still a doubt remained.

"You will not trust me, then, with your secret?" she said. "Come; I have but one motive in this—my father's welfare. He is troubled, distressed. I want to know if there is good ground for this. He suspects that the firm is being imposed upon—robbed, perhaps. Is this so? And if it is, who is the man we have to fear?"

Pembrose recoiled from that question with a look which startled the questioner. His colour went, and he began to tremble.

The sense of the position in which he stood came upon him with overwhelming force. The man who was the object of his suspicions was the man who, as he believed, had but the night before made this girl an offer of his hand. The name she called on him to confide to her was, as he supposed, the name of her lover! No wonder that he stood like one stricken dumb.

"You do not answer me," Ruby asked, with a tinge of annoyance in her voice.

"Because," he replied, not knowing what to answer or how to evade the inquiry—"because I cannot."

She dropped her hand, and turned away with a sigh.

"I had no right to ask you," she said.

"Yes, every right," he rejoined, eagerly; "and if I refuse, it is because I would spare you pain."

"Pain?"

"Yes; think, think for a moment of those you know—of your attached friends—if I dared, I would say your more than attached friends, and put it to yourself whether there is not one—that is, whether there are not some among them whom it would pain you to regard in a less favourable light than you do at this moment?"

She answered him quickly.

"Mr. Pembrose," she said, "I have not a friend in the world whom I would not sacrifice for my father's sake. There is not a living soul against whom I would not rather hear the deadliest truth than his happiness should be destroyed."

"Not one?" he asked, eagerly.

"Not one."

The agony of that moment showed itself in glistening drops on his brow—the temptation to speak out was so strong; yet it was more than counterbalanced by the feeling that only a coward—a dastard—would destroy the faith of that pure girl in the man whom she had chosen, especially when all that he suspected against this man, this Harcourt, might be without foundation. Struggling manfully for some way of escape, he knew not what to answer.

"No, no!" he cried out, "no random word of mine shall destroy one bright illusion, or blast one cherished confidence. You are happy—"

With a quick action she raised her hand and tore away the veil which thus far had partially hidden her face. He saw that she was deathly pale. He saw that her eyes were full of tears, and that the lids were red with long weeping.

"Look at me," she said—"look at this happy face." He looked aghast.

"Your father is surely worse than you have cared to admit?" he said.

"No."

"But you have been weeping?"

"I have passed a night of bitter anguish. To that has succeeded a day of terrible anxiety. Mr. Pembrose, you are in my father's confidence—a tried and trusted friend. I cannot bid you look into my heart and share its secrets. That would be unwomanly. But when you speak to me of happiness, I may give confidence for confidence, so far as to declare to you that it has passed from me for ever."

"Then," he exclaimed, urged by impetuosity of feeling beyond what could have been wrung from him in a calmer moment, "if I have jumped to the conclusion that something happened at your father's house last night which was most agreeable to your wishes—"

"You have heard what happened, then?" she interrupted.

"No!—not one word, save that, overcome by emotion, you abruptly quitted your guests before the evening was over."

"And you supposed that I did so because—"

She hesitated; her voice was choked with emotion.

"Will you pardon me," he replied, "if I say in one word that I had persuaded myself that Mr. Edmund Harcourt was the cause of your pleasurable distress?"

A crimson flush mantled in the white cheeks and marble brow of the indignant girl.

"What!" she cried, "he has already proclaimed his triumph, and held me up as an object of derision! He has made *you* his confidant."

"Not so," the other hastily interposed. "No word has passed between us. We have not met. Oh, Miss Framlingham, this is inexpressibly painful. I cannot forgive myself for having suffered so much to pass my lips. Pray let it pass; let all be as if nothing had transpired between us."

"No," she replied, with desperate firmness and determination, "since you have spoken so far, I must know all. You knew that this Harcourt was among our most favoured guests. You saw—for you have had opportunities—the attentions he has paid me. You have heard us spoken of in the same breath. Is this so?"

"It is."

"And you have been led to suppose that last night he—he addressed me? Oh, why, why cannot I speak the words? But what matters? Understand that henceforth there is in my heart no feeling towards Edmund Harcourt but that of the bitterest contempt and aversion."

Overcome with emotion, she buried her face in her hands, and sat quietly weeping; rocking herself to and fro on her chair, but uttering no word.

The agitated spectator of her grief stood mute, with the painful consciousness of having surprised her in a secret too private, too sacred in its nature to be shared, and most of all to be shared by him. It would have given him the most intense satisfaction could he have withdrawn and left the fair girl to her sorrow.

But this was impossible.

Too much had passed between them—too much and too little. She had taken him into her confidence

thus far, wholly without any intention of doing so; but that step having been taken, it must be followed up.

Arthur Pembrose felt this, and only waited until the full tide of her anguish should have subsided to speak again.

"You will forgive me, Miss Framlingham," he at length said. "I know you will forgive me, and believe that I act from the sincerest of motives. But you have asked my confidence. You have put a question to me; is it still your pleasure that I should answer it?"

She looked up with a vacant gaze, as if for the moment unable to realize the meaning of his words. Then recovering herself, she replied—

"It is."

"In a word, then," he pursued, "the suspicions I entertain—suspicions which are every day becoming more in the nature of fixed convictions—have reference to—Mr. Edmund Harcourt."

"To him?"

"To no other."

"And you believe that he is the enemy—the secret foe whom my father has so much cause to dread?"

"I do. I would not, I could not, have spoken these words but for the confidence you have been led to repose in me, and the discovery that has enabled me to make. Up to this moment I believed that he was your accepted lover. I had no idea but that he last evening made you an offer of his hand. It might be rash for me to draw that conclusion from your father's words, but I believed this; and suspecting what I have reason to suspect, the impression has given me the most intense uneasiness. I could not speak out; I could give neither warning nor caution—I could only suffer and wait."

Something in the tone of his voice, something in the earnest respectfulness of his manner, impressed the listener strongly, and awoke in her an interest she could not at the moment understand.

But earnestness is contagious, and it had its due effect.

"I comprehend your position," she said, hurriedly, as if eager to put aside that part of the question; "but now, tell me, what is to be done? Edmund Harcourt is a villain—you believe that?"

"Firmly."

"His villainy is directed against those whom he mixes with as friends?"

"Yes. That is my firm conviction."

"That is not enough. We must have proof. I must save my father, who is endangered by his arts; I must save my friend, for whom he affects to cherish feelings of affection. This becomes my duty. But I can do nothing alone. I must have aid, and that aid *you* must lend me."

She held her hand out, and he grasped it; but with such a tumultuous throbbing at his heart, such a thrill of delicious sensations in every nerve, that he was for an instant incapable of speech.

"I repeat," Ruby Framlingham said, "*you* must aid me. You will do this?"

"With my whole soul!"

"It's a compact, then. We unite for one determined purpose. Edmund Harcourt is our prey. He is clever, but his cleverness shall not save him. He is wicked: let him tremble in his wickedness. I know you, Arthur

Pembrose, for an honest man. I will trust you as a true one. Promise me that you will help me to your utmost to crush this man!"

"I swear to do it," he began.

She interposed her hand.

"No, no! Your word; I can trust *that*. Besides, he *swore* last night eternal fealty to Eva Knowles! You promise me!"

"I promise."

They clasped hands upon it, and Ruby Framlingham turned to go. It had been a strange meeting; it was a yet stranger parting. Arthur Pembrose lighted his guest to the door, and saw her drive off. Then he returned to his room, to dream over the strangeness of all that had happened, and to question eagerly the possibilities of the mystic future, which met all his eagerness with a blank, pitiless gaze.

CHAPTER VII.—INSIDE THE OLD HOUSE.

THOUGH the evening was early, yet darkness had already swathed up the short November day. The red smear in the sky, which had done duty as sunset, had faded out: the sky was black, the streets were black, and the lights were blurred, as if the night now beginning was a night near its ending, and the lamps had grown dim from exhaustion.

Down by the river-side all was gloomy, sodden, and cheerless.

The ruinous old house, of which we have before caught a glimpse, was neither more nor less desolate in aspect than those about it. Uniformity of desolation characterized the entire scene. Towering high, and with a tendency towards toppling forward, it was the natural centre of all that was uninviting in the neighbourhood; but night, like death, levels all distinctions, and in the gloom the old house ceased to assert its superiority.

As seen from without, it appeared tenantless. No ray of light glimmered in any window. No sound came from within. All was dark, dead, and deserted.

Yet there was in this house one room of a bright and cheerful aspect, tenanted, and presenting an appearance by no means unpleasant to contemplate. It gave to view an interior that, from its quaintness, would have formed a picture ready to the hands of an artist. It was large and lofty; the walls in panel, and the upper part open to the roof of the house, the beams of which, black with age, were distinctly visible. Between those beams, during the day-time, the light struggled into the apartment in long rays; but at the hour of which we speak it was lit by a lamp, suspended by a long iron chain from the middle of the roof-ridge. The lamp, though only of red clay, was of a quaint pattern—evidently from the East.

It might have been taken as the key to everything in the room, as being at once rude but artistic, of no great value, yet indicating the taste of the occupants. A bright fire was burning in an open cage on the hearth, the flames reflected on a shining surface of a circle of Dutch tiles. The furniture was old and massive. The worn remains of an Indian rug covered part of the floor; the rest was bare. The walls were covered with relics of travel and adventure in all climes, especially in the way of weapons and instruments used on shipboard. There were also a few pictures, small but choice, chiefly of the Flemish school.

At a table immediately under the swing-lamp sat a man engaged in a somewhat unmanly occupation.

He was advanced in life, but looked older by reason of the fashion of his hair and his long beard. Deep lines in his brow and face had also something to do with the impression of age conveyed. The man's black hair, faintly grizzled, just powdered with grey, fell over his shoulders, and his beard—black and ample—descended to his waist. His face was sallow, his features strong and well marked, and his eyes magnificent—large, full and sparkling.

He might have been a warrior, a prophet—anything manly or heroic.

And he was occupied with a needle in mending old point lace!

The table before him was heaped with lace; and rolls of it, of incalculable value, filled an open chest by his side. The light of the lamp glowed on his shining hair and beard, and on the needle, which he plied with long, lithe fingers, quite absorbed in the work, which he performed with incredible dexterity.

In his occupation he was watched by a second person, a young German-looking girl, with eyes the hue of the germander, who sat in a great leathern chair by the fireside, bending over a book which she was too perturbed to read—not openly perturbed, but flushed and restless; a state of things indicated by the frequent impatient throwing back of two long flaxen tails of hair, which would fall from her soft round shoulders on to the open book.

This was the girl who had opened the door of the house on the night when Joe Ember had watched the two strangers enter.

A pleasant, rosy-faced girl, not more than sixteen, with a white skin and plenty of dimples, and the shoulders aforesaid, which shrugged when she laughed, and formed part of a delightfully round, plump little figure, quite that of a woman, though belonging to a mere child. She seemed one of those favoured little creatures born to be happy—to enjoy life and its good things, and to pay for all in the acceptable coin of smiles and laughter, that somehow helped to make the world brighter than she found it.

But on this night she did not smile.

There was a little pucker of the smooth brow, and a restless twitching of the red lips; to say nothing of the restless tapping of a hidden little foot, which bespoke uneasiness, if not irritation.

The man, who might have been a hero or a prophet, but who was simply a mender of old lace, appeared absorbed in his work. Silent and impassive, he bent over it; yet it was easy to see that he was not unconscious of his companion's ill-restrained restlessness. Those big eyes, which looked out from under heavy brows, with a quick uneasiness, like the eyes of an animal, saw everything, while seeming to see nothing. A habit of silent watching had apparently intensified their natural keenness—a habit acquired when, and kept up on what grounds, who might venture to surmise?

The slipping of the book from the girl's knees on to the ground caused him to stop and look full at her.

"The book wearies you?" he asked.

It was hardly the voice of an Englishman, though the foreign accent was of the very slightest.

"I am tired of reading," was the answer.

"Indeed! Well, there is your guitar. Play."

"I cannot."

"And why? What ails you?"

She avoided the question by stooping to pick up the book.

"You have been restless for a week past," the man said. "Something troubles you, Zerina?"

"No; nothing. At least—"

"What?"

"What should trouble me, father? You love me, and I have need of nothing. But I think—I sometimes think these books put foolish fancies into my head. I read of high life, and I would be a lady. I read of heroines, and wonder if I am of the stuff of which heroines are made. I read—"

"You read of heroes, too," he interrupted. "Perhaps the thoughts of them perturb you. Eh? Is it so?"

A crimson flush dyed brow and bosom and arms, and sliding from the great chair in which she had been half buried, Zerina buried her face in her hands at her father's knee. With womanly tenderness he laid his thin, long hand on her bright hair.

"You plead guilty to the heroes? Is that so?" the father asked, in a playful tone.

"No," replied the girl; "they are all weak and foolish, and talk and act as men never do. Why, you are fifty times a better hero than the best of them—if you were only rich, and deep in love, and never ate—that is indispensable—never ate, or drank, or wanted sleep, or anything that common people do want."

"If, in short, I were only everything that I am not. Eh, Zerina?"

"No, not everything. You are brave enough, clever enough, handsome enough. I can fancy that you might be, say, a prince in disguise—"

"Living in one chamber in my dismantled palace?"

"Yes."

"Among the relics of former grandeur?"

"Exactly."

"Hiding the secret of my blue blood, in order that I might the more comfortably pick up a precarious living, by sitting to artists for patriarchs and prophets—as I do—and filling up my leisure by following this lace-mending art, in which I have grown such an expert?"

"That's it. The blue blood would atone for everything."

"But how if, in place of it, we put money? Is wealth a disqualification in a hero?"

"Not if it is of the right sort. But it should come through mysterious channels, or be found in secret caves, or be made by nefarious means. It mustn't be money in the funds, or come from shares, or be kept in a bank, or anything of that sort. Such a thing is unheard of among heroes and heroines."

"True. Then rank, or wealth, or mystery is indispensable? And youth—what say you of youth? That, I suppose, atones for all deficiencies? And that reminds me our young friends come here again to-night."

"To-night?"

She gasped out the words, rising to her feet as she did so.

The black eyes watched her intently, and the cadaverous cheek of the man grew a shade duskier.

"We have business of moment to transact," he said.

"These good, kind youths have some projects for our welfare, but their business is as yet a secret."

"And it will bring them here often?"

"Very often."

The delight those words inspired could not be concealed. It irradiated the girl's face as if sunshine lit it up.

"You are glad?" the other asked.

"Oh, yes; because it is so gloomy in this old place, and I see so few pleasant faces, and hear so little of what goes on in the great world outside. Beyond the rough seafaring men, who come to bring you curiosities and treasures from abroad, and who hold such long secret conferences with you when they drive their bargains, who comes here at all? And how strangely Edmund and Randolph differ from such men! They are bright and gay, and know how to treat a woman as she would be treated."

"They are fine, noble gentlemen, and our humble roof is only too much honoured by their presence under it. Hark, what was that?"

A sound which made them both start, and gaze each at the other with inquiring looks.

Queer Cards.

CHAPTER III.—EVIL COUNSEL.

"I went away from Mrs. Cormack's in a passion of grief and rage that this message had no effect upon. How could it? Forgiving was hard work to begin so soon, and I without a friend or home almost. I hadn't learnt much of trouble then, except poverty and my father's neglect; and I couldn't forgive *him*, let alone the other one. Only one hope did it keep up, and that was, that I might hear where Miss Rose was going, and see her again. When I got back to our house, I saw father standing against the doorpost with two other men, and swearing because I had taken away the key. After I had opened the door, and got a cuff that sent me head first into the passage, a light was struck, and the three men went into the room, and stood leaning against the empty fireplace, talking.

"I went in without being noticed, and heard my father say—

"Well, some other way must be tried; it won't be the first time with either of us; but the thing is, where?"

"Aint anybody got a shillin' to drink over it?" one of the others said.

"Just then father catches sight of me, and turned round with a laugh.

"Hullo!" he says, 'why, you are out late to-night, Bill; you haven't come to bring home your wages, have you? Or p'raps you'd like to clean *our* knives and forks,' he says; 'they aint very dirty with vittles; they're rusty, though.'

"I don't know what sort of change had come over me. I seemed to have grown completely hard all of a sudden, and, what was stranger, I wasn't frightened at any of them. P'raps I'd got to know how I was to stand alone from that day; p'raps the fight with Rose's father had changed me; however it was, I felt as though I could laugh too, just the same sort of laugh as father did; but I put a chair between us, and said—

"I've left my place for good; where's mother?"

"Well, as you've left your place for good, I s'pose you want to live here for good," says he; 'you can, if you like; the rent aint high at half-a-crown a week,

and, as I can't keep a great hulking, snivelling hound like you, you'd better go and find something for supper.'

"I had a shilling or two left in my pocket that I had saved from the pennies that the gardener gave me now and then, and I held it out in my hand.

"I've enough here to get something to eat," I said; 'but tell me, where's mother?'

"My father was coming on to take it away from me, and I was dodging to the door, but one of his pals stopped him.

"No, fair's fair," said this one; 'here, hand over the money, and we'll take you with us, and have something to drink. Your mother's gone down into Hertfordshire to stop at some of her friends' houses down there, near Amwell.'

"How is she?" I asked, before I gave him the money.

"Goin' home fast, I hear from him," said he, motioning to my father.

"Yes!" my father said, 'she's worse and worse; but there's better quarters than this where she is, I can tell you; and they won't have nothing to do with me; p'raps they're right. Now, then, who's coming to have some of this drink? Come on, Bill!'

"We all went to a dirty public-house, in one of the worst slums in our neighbourhood; and after having some bread and cheese, one of the men went out and spoke to the landlord. I s'pose he knew how to make it all right, for the beer was soon cleared off the table, and hot rum and water was brought in.

"I heard my father whispering to one of his pals, and after that they all stooped their heads together, and began to talk; but I paid no attention, for I'd been persuaded to drink some of the mixed liquor, and felt giddy and sleepy; but for all that I didn't alter in my feelings a bit; no, the drink seemed to make me harder and more careless than I was at first; and instead of thinking how to carry out Miss Rose's message, I began to hope that I should have a turn with Mr. Feene, and serve him out some time or other.

"Then the men called for more spirits, and one of 'em—the one that had taken my part—began asking me how it was I'd left my place, and got me into a line to tell him what sort of a house it was.

"The room had nobody but ourselves in it, and before I'd finished my second tumbler of drink, I began to find out that they were laying a plan for a burglary, and that they had made up their minds to attempt to rob the very house that I'd come from.

"By that time I didn't seem to care anything about it; and whether I was drunk, or jumped at the opportunity for taking my revenge on the man who had beaten me, or was led into it all, I don't know; all I do know is, that I'd been patted on the back and made a good deal of, for marking out a sort of plan of the house, with bits of broken 'bacca pipe, on the table.

"Father took me home, for I could hardly walk by myself; and when I woke next morning I found the door locked, and a pint of beer and gin standing just inside it, with a penny loaf and a pat of butter. I went to sleep again without touching them, and, about dinner-time, in came the man who had first spoken to me, and told me to look sharp and wash my face (he brought up some water in a bowl), and to come out with him and have some dinner.

"We went to the same public-house, where we found

the other men waiting for us, with a cloth laid, and a piece of boiled beef and carrots just ready. I trembled like a leaf, for it rushed on me all of a sudden that I'd been plotting against Miss Rose, and that she might come to harm through me. Twice I tried to get away, but they stopped me; and when I asked them what they wanted me for, they dragged me into a chair and locked the door.

"I had forgotten half that I'd told them the day before, but they soon reminded me of it, and swore that if I didn't stick to my word, I should have a knife in me before the next day. It was useless to attempt to escape, and I sat down at the table and tried to eat. I only made up my mind to one thing, and that was to keep any of them from going into Miss Rose's room; for they didn't know the house as I did, and I actually felt a sort of triumph that I could punish her father, and yet keep her from harm.

"There was very little drinking after dinner, and my father and his pal went out just at dark, and left me with my friend. I paid no heed to his talk, for I was thinking how I could persuade him to give up the job, and at last told him about Miss Rose, and what she told me. He only laughed, and said—

"All right! you needn't prig anything, you know. All you've got to do is to show us the way; but whether we go and pay her a visit out of compliment depends on the swag. Don't think to play us false, young 'un,' he said; 'because if you do, it'll be the worse for both on yer!'

"We waited a long time, and he got very restless, walkin' to the window, and whistling every now and then; but while he was looking out into the street, I took the carving knife off the table, where we'd had dinner, and slipped it inside the lining of my jacket.

"When the two came back they said it was all right, that they'd been down to the house, and got inside the garden. Then they all began to smoke, but not to drink anything; and I fell asleep till they woke me up, and took me between 'em into the street.

"I knew what I was to do without their telling; but my father kept hold of my arm, and walked me down the back streets on the way to Highgate for about a mile. There was a cart waiting at the door of a public-house, and he went in and called for a glass of brandy; then he made me have one, and we both got into the cart and drove away. The other two men were waiting at the corner of the lane leading to Mr. Feene's.

"Father only made a sign to 'em, and went on to the gate, me with him.

"You'll go first round the house, and I'll come close after you,' he said. 'Then if you know they're all safe in bed, we'll go back and fetch Big Jim (that was my old friend) and the tools. Sprig'll keep a look-out in the garden; and mind you, Bill, you've done it now, and may as well keep square with me, or you'll get a knife in you!'

"I felt for my own knife in my jacket.

"Everything was quiet, and the blinds were down all over the house. I looked up at Miss Rose's window, and felt that I should never see her again. Here was the end of it. I'd neglected her warnings the first night, and now I felt that I was a thief, perhaps worse; for I knew I should use that knife if I was put to it; and wished I had left it behind, and let the men kill me. But it was too late now.

"We went back to the gate, and there my father put a comforter round my neck, and tied it all round my mouth; they both of them did the same to themselves, and pulled their caps down over their heads.

"All I had to do was to go into one of the outhouses, where I knew a window led into a pantry in the passage, and before I knew it a'most, Big Jim had slipped a bit of wire under the sash (father had stooped down for him to stand on his shoulders), and pushed back the bolt. There was only just room for me to get in, but I knew the place well, and that the window was just over a kitchen table, so that I got down without much trouble, as I'd no boots on.

"The door was only fastened with a button, and it opened as soon as I touched it. Then I went and let the two of them in the back way; the bar and bolt made a clanking, and father pinched my arm and swore, as he came in without his shoes, but nobody stirred in the house.

"Big Jim had a lantern with him, and I went upstairs, and pointed out Mr. Feene's bed-room. Father went into the drawing-room, and left me to keep watch in the passage. This was what I wanted, for Miss Rose's bed-room was up four stairs at the end of the landing, and I crawled close to the door and listened. I couldn't hear a breath, and all sorts of dreadful thoughts came upon me, for I thought, perhaps, that she might be lying there dead. Then I cried; but last of all a feeling of revenge against my pals made me grit my teeth together, and I swore to myself that if they came to that room, I would stab the first that went in.

"I took out my knife and stood trembling all over, for I saw Big Jim go along the passage to the rooms, and I knew he'd soon come back. I was ready; but before I had stopped trembling, I heard the creak of a door inside the room I was watching, and presently the door where I was standing opened, and there stood my father. He'd come in through one of the other rooms that led to that one; but I hadn't time to think of that then, I was mad with fear and rage, and rushed forward with the knife lifted up to stab him, but my arm was caught hold of behind, and Big Jim twisted my wrist till the knife dropped on the floor.

"You're a pluck'd 'un,' he says; 'but don't you see it's your own father?'

"I said nothing, for I had looked into the room and it was empty, except a few old chairs and a table.

"Both Big Jim and father began to swear dreadful; for, as it turned out, there was nobody in the house but the gardener and his wife, and Big Jim had locked them both in their bed-room without their waking. There was nothing in the place either but old furniture.

"But I wasn't glad. I'd made up my mind for some sort of revenge. I was glad that Miss Rose had gone away; but there I was, a thief, and a'most a murderer, and all for nothing; and I got harder still and more careless, though there was a hell inside me of misery and rage, and very high despair.

"Nothing but half a dozen spoons was found to share among the thieves, and we went back and drank three of 'em away.

"From that night I was altogether brought into my father's plans; first, because I was desperate, and didn't seem to care what became of me; and afterwards—when I got to be able to think of mother, and of the sort of life I was likely to lead when I was a man—be-

cause I didn't know which way to turn, nor where to look for a meal that was honestly come by.

"For a time I used only to be sent with messages to one place or another amongst his pals, or sometimes to gentlemen who were to meet me at certain places in the City, or at the West-end (public-houses, mostly); but when I wasn't employed at this I had the run of the streets, and sometimes I swept a crossing, or held a horse, or even begged, if I thought I could get anything by it; for begging and stealing was the way most of my companions got a living, and I was young enough to drop down lower and lower; for I'd passed the hope of being respectable, and took anything that came first.

"I never stole anything, though I can't tell why. P'raps I was never hungry enough, for father always gave me a meal's victuals, and if he was not at home, I knew where to find Big Jim. I don't think I was over-honest; but somehow I hadn't any liking for thieving, and didn't care for anything, so that I wasn't starved."

A Crocodile Crusade.

DAVID COPPERFIELD was not the only boy who delighted in crocodiles, for your humble servant the writer always viewed the crocodile of the Nile with as much veneration as an inhabitant of the land through which old Nilus flows. I used to sit and pore over the natural history books which told of these huge creatures seizing their prey, man or quadruped come down to drink; then of the way in which they dragged the struggling creature into and beneath the waters, to drown and devour it at leisure. Those books used to give me goose-skin—the style of horror that young people enjoy as much as a good ghost story. At the same time, after reading my fill of the doings of these sanguinary monsters, I used to make a vow—namely, that I would save up all my pocket money, buy a gun, and go out to Egypt on a crusade against crocodiles.

Alas! I never saved up that pocket money till it arrived at the sum of two shillings and sixpence without breaking down at that point. There was a fatality about that half-crown. Up to two and three was easy enough, but two and six culminated in weakness. For there are so many things that can be bought for half-a-crown: scarlet flannel cricketing caps, paint boxes, four-bladed knives, fishing-rods, books. Half-a-crown, in fact, is, if it were generally known, the most facile coin in the world for gliding through the fingers, it is so easily spent.

It was not through my own savings, then, but simply from being called upon from matters of business, that I at last did go to Egypt—many, many years after. But when I did look upon the muddy stream all my old feelings came back, and I determined to have a run up, gun in hand, in one of the dahabeahs.

My acquaintance with the *crocodilia* had not largely increased since boyhood's days, for I had been compelled to study the natural history of teas and spices from the East instead of the animal kingdom. I knew, however, that the crocodile of the Nile was a different creature from the alligator of America, and the muggur of the Ganges and other Indian rivers. In fact, I believe it takes precedence for size over any of the others; though some monsters have been found in tropic Australia, a land formerly believed to be free from such an

insect pest, as Mark Twain would have called it. In fact, I have seen a dead specimen from Australia some twenty feet long.

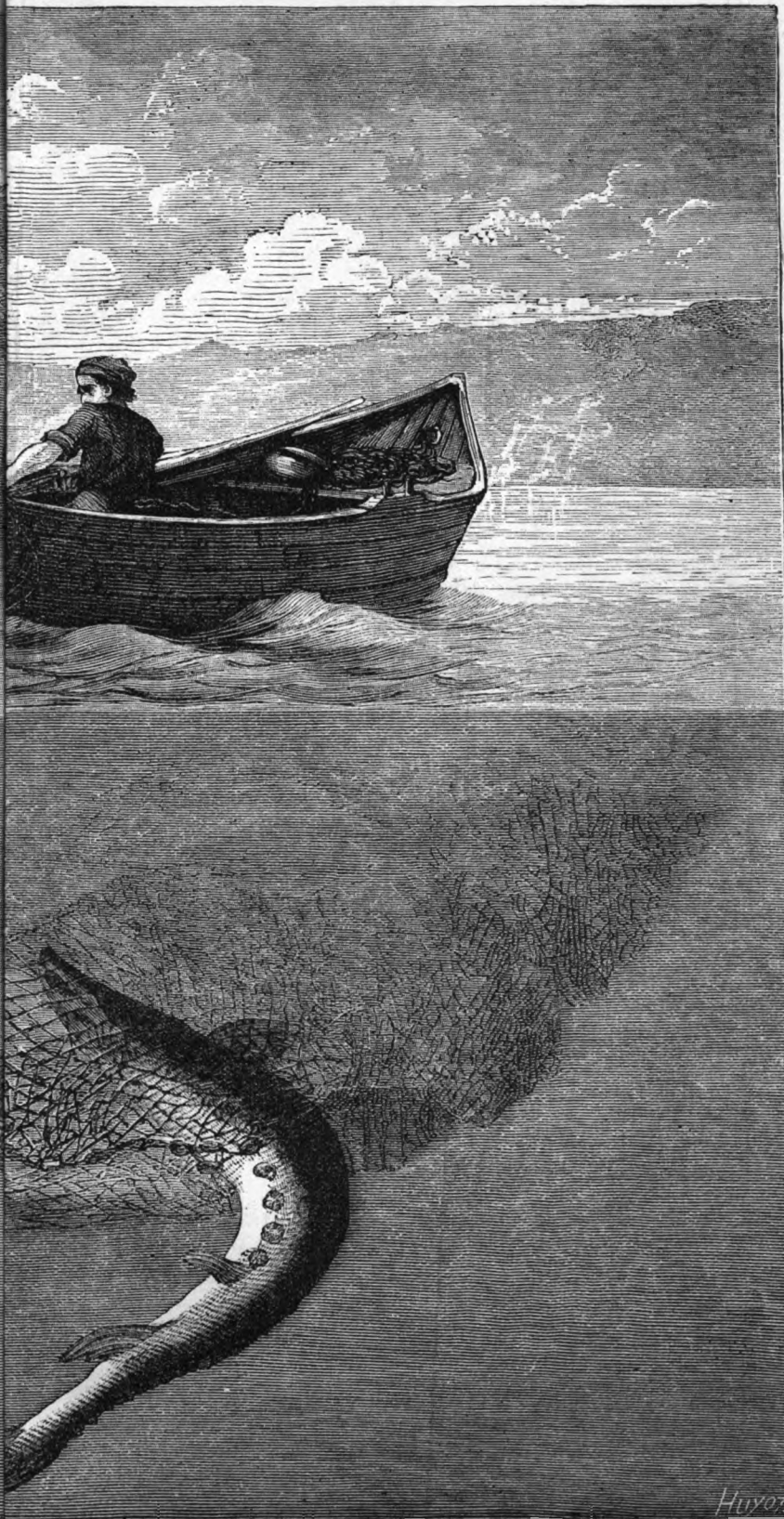
In olden times, and probably here and there still lurking about some particularly juicy mud-bank, there were crocodiles in the Nile thirty feet long, but these were few and far between, like the great pike of our rivers and lakes; and, to my great disgust, I went on day after day, slowly sailing up the stream, without getting a shot at a single reptile. Certainly there were the ruins of ancient Egypt on either bank to console me a little; but I had come to see crocodiles—the great types of the little creatures I used so virulently to persecute with worm, hook, and string in the round pond at Southwood, which then swarmed with newts.

At last I had a shot at the nose of a crocodile, which was pointed out to me by one of the boatmen, peering out of some reeds by the muddy shore; and from the plunge which followed I had the pleasure of seeing a swirl in the water, which betokened that mine enemy had been alarmed, not shot.

I wanted to see one of the thirty-feet monsters, and to have a fair shot at his eye, so, as a matter of course, I did not; but after days of patience, I was at length rewarded by a good view of some six or seven of the uncleanly beasts. It was quite early one morning that a boatman aroused me, and, taking my gun, I looked where he pointed, towards a sparse bed of reeds; and then, getting a powerful double lorgnette, made up for their being far out of my ideas of shot, and had a good quiet inspection of the reptiles. Some were on a mud-bank, and others were straggling in and out of the water in an indolent, careless way; and I could not help being struck by the utter want of stiffness displayed by them, and considered to be inseparable to their scaly forms. Far from being rigid, they seemed to me to be tolerably lithe, and very undulatory in their movements, while their heads had a rounded chubbiness of contour that I had not expected to see.

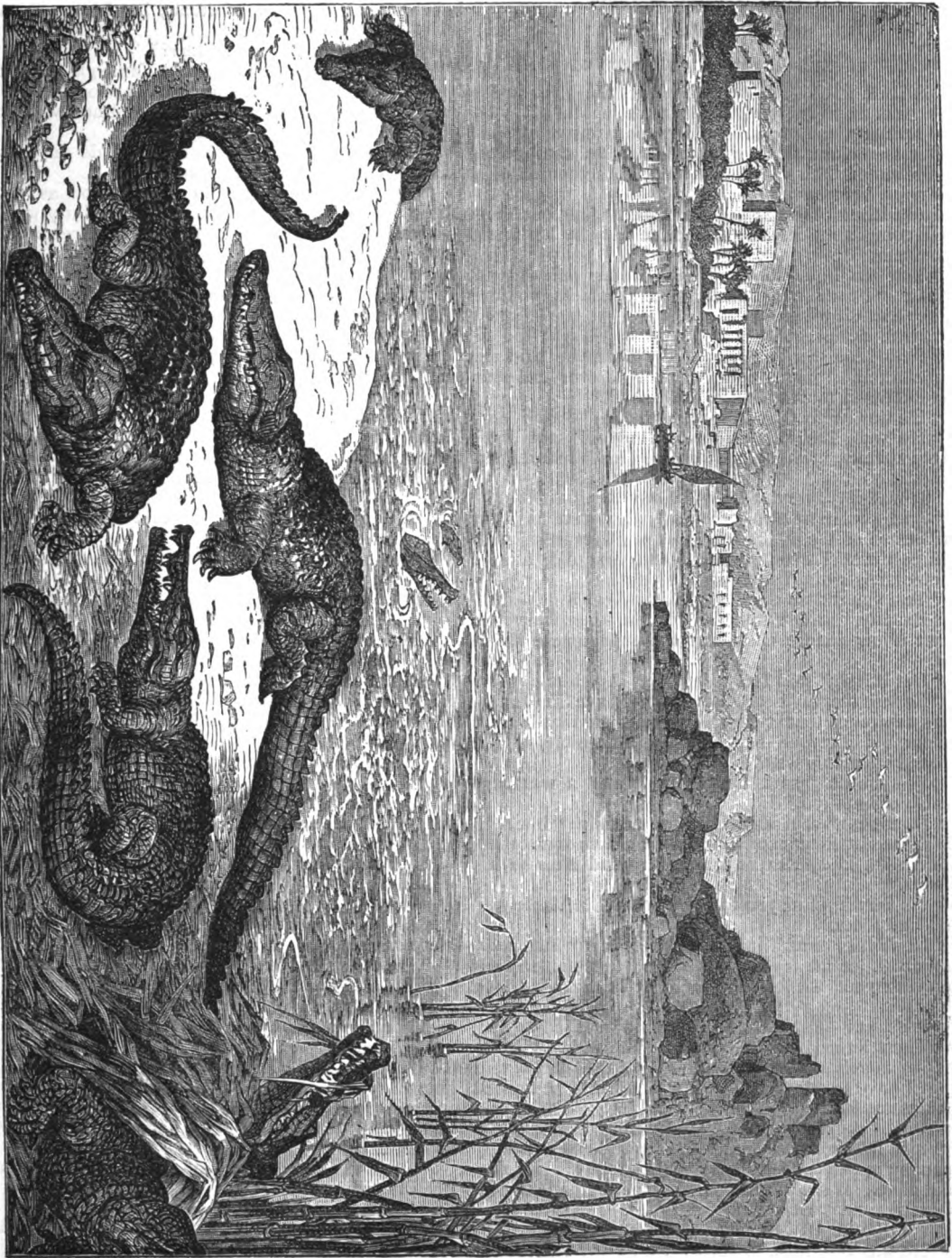
But instead of being the monstrous creatures I had imagined, the largest was not more than ten feet in length. All the same, though, they would have made terrible adversaries in the water. They scuffled out of sight long before we came within easy range, and I had to be satisfied, for I saw no more; and my great crocodile crusade remains unattempted to the present day.

THE LARGEST PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE WORLD.—The Sydney (Australia) *Evening News* gives an account of two views of Sydney, taken by Mr. Holterman on negative plates, one of which is five feet by three feet two inches, and the other four feet six inches square. Apart from the size of the two pictures, they are splendid specimens of the photographer's art, the outlines being sharp and clear, and the various objects shown coming out prominently before the eye. The difficulty of producing pictures of such size can be best understood and appreciated by photographers, among many of whom the belief is prevalent that it is not possible to execute photographs of such magnitude. In addition to the separate large prints, Mr. Holterman has executed a panoramic view of Sydney and the harbour thirty-three feet in length, covering a space about six miles in length, and the whole of the perspective is shown much clearer than can be seen by the naked eye.



Mosm

Huyot



"UNDULATORY IN THEIR MOVEMENTS."—(Page 138.)

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER XLII.—LADY REA'S STATE OF MIND.

FRANK PRATT was quite right, the Rea family was in town; and thanks to Aunt Matilda, who had sent to Captain Vanleigh a notification of all that had taken place, that gentleman and his companion had resumed their visits; and had, in the course of a few days, become quite at home.

Lady Rea had felt disposed to rebel at first, but Vanleigh completely disarmed the little lady by his frank behaviour.

"You see, Lady Rea," he said to her one day, in private, "I cannot help feeling that you look upon me rather as an intruder."

"Really, Captain Van—"

"Pray hear me out, dear Lady Rea," he said, in protestation. "You preferred poor Trevor as your son-in-law—I must call him Trevor still."

"He was as good and gentlemanly a—"

"He was, Lady Rea—he was indeed," said Vanleigh, warmly, "and no one lamented his fall more than I did."

"It was very, very sad," said Lady Rea.

"And you must own, dear Lady Rea, that as soon as I heard of the attachment between Trevor—I must still call him Trevor, you see—and your daughter, I immediately withdrew all pretensions."

"Yes, you did do that," said Lady Rea.

"Exactly," said Vanleigh. "Well, then, now the coast is once more clear, and the engagement at an end—"

"But it isn't," said Lady Rea.

"Excuse me, my dear Lady Rea—I have Sir Hampton's assurance that it is so. He tells me that Trevor—poor old Trevor—resigned his pretensions in the most gentlemanly way."

"Yes, he did," said Lady Rea; "and it was very foolish of him, too."

"Doubtless," said Vanleigh, with a smile; "but still, under the circumstances, how could he have done otherwise? Ah, Lady Rea, it was a very sad blow to his friends."

"It's very kind of you to say so, Captain Vanleigh," said Lady Rea.

"Don't say that," replied Vanleigh. "But now, Lady Rea, let me try and set myself in a better position with you. Of course you must know that I love Miss Rea?"

"Well, yes—I suppose so," said the little lady.

"Then let us be friends," said Vanleigh. "I am coming merely as a visitor—a friend of the family; and what I have to ask of you is this, that I may be treated with consideration."

"Oh, of course, Captain Vanleigh."

"If in the future Miss Rea can bring herself to look upon my pretensions with favour, I shall be the happiest man alive. If she cannot—well, I will be patient, and blame no one."

"He was very nice, my dear," said Lady Rea to her daughter. "No one could have been more so; but I told him I didn't think there was any hope."

"Of course there isn't, ma, dear," said Fin; "and

it's very indecent of him to come as he does, and so soon after Richard's misfortune; but I know how it all was—Aunt Matty did it."

"Aunt Matty did it, my dear?"

"Yes, ma. Wrote to Captain Vanleigh at his club, and told him all about how pa said poor Richard was not to be mentioned in the house, and how we were all brought up to town for change."

"I don't think Aunt Matty would do anything so foolish, my dear," said mamma.

"Then how came they to call as soon as we had been up two days?" said Fin. "Aunt Matty would do anything she thought was for our welfare, even if it was to poison us."

"Oh, Fin, my dear!"

"Well, I can't help it, ma, dear; she is so tiresome. Aunt Matty is so good; I'm glad I'm not, for it does make you so miserable and uncharitable. Oh, ma, darling, what a dreadfully wicked little woman you must be!"

"Oh, my dear!"

"I'm sure, Aunt Matty thinks you are. I often see her looking painfully righteous at you when you are reading the newspaper or a story, while she is studying 'Falling Leaves from the Tree of Life' or 'The Daily Dredge.'"

"My dear Fin, don't talk so," said Lady Rea. "Aunt Matty means all for the best."

"Yes, ma, dear," said Fin, with a sigh—"that's it. If she only meant things for the second best, I wouldn't care, for then one might perhaps be comfortable."

"But, my dear, don't talk so," said Lady Rea; "and I think you are misjudging Aunt Matty about her sending to Captain Vanleigh."

"Oh, no, ma, dear," cried Fin. "It's quite right. That dreadful noodle, Sir Felix, let it all out to me just now in the dining-room, while the captain was upstairs with you."

"Has he been speaking to you, then?" said Lady Rea, eagerly.

"Yes, ma," said Fin, coolly; but there was a pretty rosy flush in her little cheek.

"What did he say, dear?"

"He-haw, he-haw, he-haw-w-w-w!" said Fin, seriously.

"Fin!"

"Well, it sounded like it, ma," said Fin; "for I never did meet such a donkey."

"But my dear Fin!"

"Well, I know, ma," exclaimed Fin, "it's rude of me; but I'm naturally rude. I've got what Aunt Matty would call the mark of the beast on me, and it makes me wicked."

"Tut, tut, tut! Fin, my dear," said Lady Rea, drawing her child to her, till Fin lay with her head resting against her, but with her face averted. "Now, come, tell me all about it. I don't like you to have secrets from me."

"Well, ma, he met me, and begged for five minutes' interview."

"Well, my dear?"

"Well, ma, I told him it was of no use, for I knew what he was going to say."

"Oh, Fin, my dear child, I'm afraid they neglected your etiquette very much at school."

"No, they didn't, ma," said Fin, with her eyes twink-

ling—"they were always sowing me with it; but I was stony ground, as Aunt Matty would say, and it never took root. Oh, ma, if you had only seen what a donkey he looked!—and he smelt all over the room, just like one of Rimmel's young men. Then," continued Fin, speaking fast and excitedly, "he went on talking stuff—said he'd lay his title and fortune at my feet; that he'd give the world to win my heart, and I told him I hadn't got one; said he should wait patiently, and kept on talk, talk, talk—all stuff that he had evidently been learning up for the occasion; and I'd have given anything to have been able to pull his ears and rumple his hair, only he might have thought it rude."

"Oh, yes, my dear," said mamma, innocently.

"And at last I said I didn't think I should ever accept any one, for I hated men; and then he sighed, and looked at me sidewise, and wanted to take my hand; and I ran out of the room, and that's all."

"But, Fin, my dear—"

"Oh, I know, ma, it was horribly rude; but I hate him. Pf! I can smell him now."

Lady Rea sighed.

"And now, I suppose," said Fin, "we are to be pestered—poor Tiny and your humble servant; they'll follow us to church, get sittings where they can watch us, and carry on a regular siege. I wish them joy of it!"

Lady Rea only sighed, and stroked the glossy head, till Fin suddenly jumped up, and ran out of the room; but only to come back at the end of a minute, and stand nodding her head.

"Well, my dear, what is it?" said Lady Rea.

"You'll have to put your foot down, mamma," said Fin, sharply.

Lady Rea glanced at her little member, which, in its delicate kid boot, looked too gentle to crush a fly; and she sighed.

"A nice state of affairs!" said Fin. "There's Tiny up in her bed-room crying herself into a decline, and Aunt Matty in the study with papa conspiring against our happiness, because it's for our good. Now, mark my words, mamma—there'll be a regular plot laid to marry Tiny to that odious Bluebeard of a captain, and if you don't stop it I shall."

Lady Rea sat, with wrinkled brow, looking puzzled at the little decisive figure before her; and then, as Fin went out with a whisk of all her light skirts, she sat for a few moments thinking, and then went up to her elder daughter's room.

CHAPTER XLII.—FRANK A VISITOR.

RICHARD felt very sanguine of success during the first weeks of his stay in London. He was young, ardent, active, and a good sailor. Some employment would be easily obtained, he thought, in the merchant service; and he only stipulated mentally for one thing—no matter how low was his beginning, he must have something to look forward to in the future—he must be able to rise. But as the days glided into weeks, and the weeks into months, he was obliged to own that it was not so easy to find an opening as he had expected, and night after night he returned to his solitary lodgings weary and disheartened.

Mrs. Fiddison sighed, and said he was very nice—so quiet; her place did not seem the same. And certainly the young fellow was very quiet, spending a great deal of his time in writing and thinking; and

more than once he caught himself watching the opposite window, and wondering what connection there could be between Vanleigh and his neighbours.

This watching led to his meeting the soft dark eyes of Netta, as she busied herself at times over her flowers, watering them carefully, removing dead leaves and blossoms, and evidently tending them with the love of one who longs for the sweet breath of the country.

Then came a smile and a bow, and Netta shrank away from the window, and Richard did not see her for a week.

Then she was there again, showing herself timidly, and as their eyes met the bow was given, and returned this time before the poor girl shrank away; and as days passed on this little intercourse grew regular, till it was a matter of course for Richard to look out at a certain hour for his pretty neighbour, and she would be there.

This went on till she would grow bold enough to sit there close to the flowers, her sad face just seen behind the little group of leaves and blossoms; and, glad of the companionship, Richard got in the habit of drawing his table to the open window, and read or wrote there, to look up occasionally and exchange a smile.

"I don't see why I shouldn't know more of them," he said to himself, one morning.

And the next time a donkey-drawn barrow laden with Covent Garden sweets passed, Richard bought a couple of pots of lush-blossomed geraniums, delivered them to Mrs. Jenkles, and sent them to Miss Lane, with his hope that she was in better health.

Mrs. Jenkles took the pots gladly, but shook her head at the donor.

"Is she so ill?" said Richard, anxiously.

"I'm afraid so, sir," said Mrs. Jenkles. "Her cough is so bad."

As she spoke, plainly enough heard from the upper room came the painful endorsement of the woman's words.

Richard went across the way thoughtfully; and as he looked from his place a few minutes after, it was to see his plants placed in the best position in the window, and he caught a grateful look directed at him by his little neighbour.

"Poor girl!" said Richard.

And a strange feeling of depression came over him as his thoughts went from her to one he loved; and he sighed as he sat making comparisons between them.

An hour after, Mrs. Fiddison came in, with her head on one side, a widow's cap in one hand, a crape bow in the other, and a note in her mouth, which gave her a good deal the look of a mourning spaniel, set to fetch and carry.

Mrs. Fiddison did not speak, only dropped the note on the table, gave Richard a very meaning look, and left the room.

"What does the woman mean?" he said, as he took up the note. "And what's this?"

"This" was a simple little note from Netta Lane, written in a ladylike hand, and well worded, thanking him for the flowers, and telling him that "mamma" was very grateful to him for the attention.

A week after, and Richard had called upon them; and again before a week had elapsed, he was visiting regularly, and sitting reading to mother and daughter as they plied their needles.

Then came walks, and an occasional ride into the country, and soon afterwards Frank Pratt called upon his old friend, to find him leading Netta quietly into the Jenkles's house, and Pratt stood whistling for a moment before knocking at Mrs. Fiddison's door, and asking leave to wait till his friend came across.

Mrs. Fiddison had a widow's cap cocked very rakishly over one ear, and she further disarranged it to rub the ear as she examined the visitor, before feeling satisfied that he had no designs on any of the property in the place, and admitting him to Richard's sanctum.

At the end of half an hour, Richard came over.

"Ah, Franky!" he exclaimed, "this is a pleasure."

"Is it?" said Pratt.

"Is it?—of course it is; but what are you staring at?"

"You. Seems a nice girl over the way."

"Poor darling!—yes," said Richard, earnestly.

"Got as far as that, has it?" said Pratt, quietly.

"I don't understand you," said Richard, staring hard.

"Suppose not," said Pratt, bitterly. "Way of the world; though I didn't expect to see it in you."

"Rede me this riddle," as Carlyle says," exclaimed Richard. "What do you mean, man?"

"Only that it's as well to be off with the old love before you begin with the new."

"Why, Franky, what a donkey you are!" said Richard, laughing. "You don't think that I—that they—that—that—well, that I am paying attentions to that young lady—Miss Lane?"

"Well, it looks like it," said Pratt, grimly.

"Why, my dear boy, nothing has ever been farther from my thoughts," said Richard. "It's absurd."

"Does the young lady think so too?"

Richard started.

"Well, really—I never looked at it in that light. But, oh, it's ridiculous. Only a few neighbourly attentions; and, besides, the poor girl's in a most precarious state of health."

"Hum!" said Pratt. "Well, don't make the girl think you mean anything. Who are they?"

"I asked no questions, of course—how could I? They are quite ladies, though, in a most impecunious state."

"Hum!" said Frank, thoughtfully, and he rose from his chair to make himself comfortable after his way; that is to say, he placed his feet in the seat, and sat on the back—treatment at which Mrs. Fiddison's modest furniture groaned. "Old lady object to this?"

Frank tapped the case of his big pipe, as he drew it from his pocket in company with a vile-scented tobacco pouch.

"Oh, no, I'm licensed," said Richard, dreamily; for his thoughts were upon his friend's words, and he felt as if he had unwittingly been doing a great wrong.

"I'm going to take this up, Dick," said Pratt, after smoking a few minutes in silence.

"Take what up?" said Richard, starting.

"This affair of yours, and these people."

"I don't understand you."

"Perhaps not," said Pratt, shortly. "But look here, Dick, you're not going to break faith with some one."

"Break faith, Frank!" exclaimed Richard, angrily.

"There is no engagement now. The poor girl is free till I have made such a fortune—he smiled bitterly—"as will enable me once more to propose. There, there, don't say another word, Franky, old man, it cuts

—deeper than you think. I wouldn't say this much to another man living. But as for that poor child over the way, I have never had a thought towards her beyond pity."

"Which is near akin to love," muttered Frank. Then aloud—"All right, Dick. I could not help noticing it; but be careful. Little girls' hearts are made of tender stuff—some of them," he said, speaking ruefully—"when they are touched by fine, tall, good-looking fellows."

"Pish!" ejaculated Richard. "Change the subject."

"Going to," said Pratt, filling his pipe afresh, and smoking once more furiously. "Better open that window, these pokey rooms so soon get full. That's right. Now, then, for a change. Look here, old fellow, you know I'm going ahead now, actually refusing briefs. Do you hear, you unbelieving-looking dog?—refusing briefs, and only taking the best cases."

"Bravo!" said Richard, trying to smile cheerily.

"I'm getting warm, Dick—making money. Q.C. some day, my boy—perhaps. But seriously, Dick, old fellow, I am going ahead at a rate that surprises no one more than yours truly. When I'd have given my ears for a good case, and would have studied it night and day, the beggars wouldn't have given me one to save my life, even if I'd have done it for nothing. Now, when I'm so pressed that it's hard work to get them up, they come and beg me to take briefs. This very morning, one came from a big firm of solicitors at ten o'clock, marked fifty guineas, and I refused it. At one o'clock, hang me if they didn't come back with it, marked a hundred, and a fellow with it, hat in hand, ready, if I'd refused again, to offer me more."

"Frank," cried Richard, jumping up, and shaking his friend warmly by the hand, "no one is more delighted than I am."

"Mind what you're up to," said Pratt, who had nearly been tilted off his perch by his friend's energy. "But I say, it don't seem like it."

"Why?"

"Because you won't share in it. Now, look here, Dick, old fellow, you must want money, and it's too bad that you won't take it."

"I don't want it, Frank—I don't, indeed," cried Richard, hastily. "Living as I do, I have enough and to spare. I tell you, I like the change."

"Gammon," said Pratt, shortly. "It's very well to talk about liking to be poor, and no one knows what poverty is better than I; but I like money as well as most men. I used to eat chaff, Dick; but I like corn, and wine, and oil, and honey better. Now, look here, Dick, once for all—if you want money, and don't come to me for it, you are no true friend."

"Franky," said Richard, turning away his face, "if ever I want money, I'll come to you and ask for it. As matters are, I have always a few shillings to spare."

As he spoke, he got up hastily, lit a pipe, and began to smoke; while Mrs. Fiddison, in the next room, heaved a sigh, took off her shoes, and went on tiptoe through the little house, opening every door and window, after carefully covering up all her widows' caps.

"There is one thing about noise," she said to herself, "it don't make the millinery smell."

"I knocked up a few days ago," said Frank, from out of a cloud.

"You are working too hard," said Richard, anxiously.

"Bliged to," said Pratt. "Took a change—ran down to Cornwall."

Richard started slightly, and smoked hard.

"Thought I'd have a look at the old place, Dick—see how matters were going on."

Silence on the part of Richard, and Pratt breathed more freely; for he had expected to be stopped.

"First man I ran against was that Mervyn, along with the chap who was upset in the cab accident in Pall Mall, and gave you his card—a Mr. John Barnard, solicitor, in Furnival's Inn—cousin or something of Mervyn's—knew me by sight, and somehow we got to be very sociable. Don't much like Mervyn, though. Good sort of fellow all the same—charitable, and so on."

Richard smoked his pipe in silence, longing to hear more of his old home, though every word respecting it came like a stab.

"Heard all about Penreife," continued Pratt, talking in a careless, matter-of-fact way. "Our friend Humphrey is being courted, it seems, by everybody. Half the county been to call upon him, and congratulate him on his rise. I expected to find the fellow off his head when I saw him; but he was just the same—begged me to condescend to come and stay with him, which of course I didn't, and as good as told me he was horribly bored, and anything but happy."

There was a pause here, filled up by smoking.

"The old people are still there, and they say the new owner's very kind to them; but our little friend Polly's away at a good school, where she is to stay till the wedding. Humphrey wants to see you."

Richard winced.

"Asked me to try and bring about a meeting, and sent all sorts of kind messages."

Richard remained silent.

"Says he feels like as if he had deprived you of your birthright; and as for the people about, they say, Dick"—Pratt paused for a few moments to light his pipe afresh—"they say, Dick, that you acted like a fool."

Richard faced round quietly, and looked straight at his friend.

"Do you think, Frank, that I acted like a fool?"

Pratt smoked for a moment or two, then he turned one of his fingers into a tobacco stopper, and lastly removed his pipe.

"Well, speaking as counsel, whose opinion is that you ought to have waited, and left the matter to the law to sift, I say yes."

"But speaking as my old friend, Frank Pratt," said Richard, "and as an honest man?"

"Well, we won't discuss that," said Frank, hopping off his perch. "Good-bye, old chap."

He shook hands hastily, and left the house, glancing up once at Sam Jenkes's upper window, and then, without appearing to notice him, taking a side glance at Barney of the black muzzle, who was making a meal off a scrap of hay, with his shoulders lending polish to a public-house board at the corner.

"There's some little game being played up here," said Frank to himself. "I'll have a talk to Barnard."

THE following may truly be quoted as an example of adding insult to injury. "Get out, you ornithorynchus!" The man departed meekly. "Who's that?" said his friend. "An ornithorynchus." "How's that?" "Well, Webster defines him as 'A beast with a bill,'"

The Man in the Open Air.

"May is here! May is here!

Let us greet her with a cheer;

Winter's gone, with all his gloom;

Trees are bristling now with bloom.

May is here! May is here!"

AND thus every year poets tell the same fib. May is certainly here, and April showers you may still fear. Ice and snow and hail have not fled, nor is the sky calm and free from clouds. In fact, May of late years has become a fiction—a practical joke, a delusion and a snare, a sham, everything that is deceptive and treacherous. If winter would proceed steadily and rationally to the beginning of May, or even not quit us till the end of it, all well and good; but in the month of March we get a week or two of perfect summer weather, and often two or more days of heat that may be said to be almost tropical.

It is then we have gleams of picnics in imagination to follow shortly, and visions of light clothing, and feel a rabid hatred of Ulsters and all top gear. But "May is here" two months later, and although nature appears during the last half-century to study neither wind nor weather, and puts on her verdant costume in spits of all changes, you will find no change in the experienced man of many winters, he buttoning up yet closer to the chin, and using the poker yet more in a frenzied mood upon the sea-coal, which seems to have imbibed the dampness of the atmosphere from which it is its mission to take off the chill.

Still, even with easterly winds and stinging hailstorms, that pepper any exposed surface with a vigour equal to the phalanx of all Eton with pea-shooters, to be out in the open air with us is to be more "at home" than in doors. We are warm throughout while in movement, which can scarcely be said of those who, let our English grates be ever so well furnished, roast on one side while raw on the other—a domestic fact which suggests some revolving apparatus, after the simple plan of a roasting jack, by which each member of a family might take his turn, turn and turn about, and thus the monopoly of the hearth by broad coat-tails or the tribe of knee-toasters might be got rid of.

We are not advocates for robbing birds' nests, nor taking the nests themselves; but an occasional careful peep into the parlour of its feathered owner, when perhaps she is sitting and her watchful mate not far off, has its interest. The parent birds almost instinctively seem to know whether you purpose harm, and many is the time we have almost laid our hand upon the crouching mother in expectancy, without her moving. But such impertinence has its limit.

We were once looking inquisitively, but as an admiring artist, into the hoop-tent of some gipsies, when a fine fellow, one of the tribe, leaning against a tree, observed, in not ill-humour—

"Now, sir, suppose I was caught peeping into your drawing-room, wouldn't you think of your spoons?"

We felt the reproof, and apologized.

But how is it, while we think it inexcusable to remove the nests of birds, we find so much delight at this season, as true field naturalists, in hunting after stickle-backs' nests? We are sure these little fish feel a pang as great at the loss of the home of their young as does any feathered proprietor, however amiable and ma-

ternal. If you doubt it, select a calm day when the pools are not ruffled, and see how desperately the cock-salmon, as we boys used to call the male stickleback, attacks any intruder who dares to approach too near to his nest.

There are three species of stickleback found in this country : the three-spined, the ten-spined, or tinker as he is called, and the fifteen-spined—the last met with in salt water. All three build nests, and fight hard to defend their brood. The nest of the three-spined is common. Here we have one, and if we are careful can without injury get it into our canvas net, and then into this wide-mouthed bottle. See, the male observes our movements, and were ever indignation and rage so clearly manifested ! His crimson breast glows like fire, and his emerald eyes flash fury. Lo, how he rushes at the net ! It is really cruel to provoke so amiable an anger. We remove the net—how glad he seems !—and fans away with his tiny fins directly over his nest, as a lark may be seen hovering over the chosen spot of her young. So ho ! he spies an enemy of his own species. What a lightning dart he makes at the trespasser, and with those sharp spines it is clear, by the retiring waddle of the attacked, that he has given no slight bayonet wound.

Now, what did that fellow want so near his neighbour's brood ? Nothing less than to gobble up the whole of the eggs, or fry and demolish the little family in a twinkling. The trout and the salmon will devour the fry of their own species and even their individual young. Not so, it would seem, does the stickleback ; for we are assured by those who have watched them closely in aquaria that even when they are grown up the parents appear to retain an affection for their offspring, and seldom or never quarrel with them, much less molest them.

Dr. Watts might have taken a hint from this fact. "Birds in their little nests agree" is an error of our nursery poet, for more quarrelsome rascals can scarcely be found than the callow brood of some birds. The nest of the stickleback is a mass of tangled grass roots, and other weeds, and becomes shapeless upon being removed from the water, resuming its form when placed in an aquarium ; or it may be that the parent, which should be taken with it, will again put his nursery in order. The eggs are in a cluster, of a pinkish hue. The progress of development may be watched with great interest, as the tiny creatures are seen, from the time their eyes first show, through the transparent ova, until their tails may be observed jerking from side to side ; and they ultimately break their prison bonds, and appear, to the delight of the parents, whose anxiety for their welfare and sustenance is increasing.

This affection, indeed, is manifested in a remarkable manner. Should, for instance, one of the youngsters stray too far from his home, Papa Stickles hurries after him, takes the little truant in his mouth and spits him out, right over the rest.

The Rev. W. Houghton, in his charming work, "Country Walks of a Naturalist with his Children," writing of the pugnacity of the stickleback, tells us he once kept a small pike, about ten inches long, in an aquarium, into which he also introduced five or six sticklebacks. It was presumed that the pike did not like the look of the prickles or spines, for he did not eat the fish. He, however, made the attempt, but

after getting Master Stickles into his mouth, he quickly threw him out again, not apparently relishing the sauce piquante so pointedly applied.

The sticklebacks were really cocks of the water—they tormented Mr. Pike dreadfully ; first one would take a bite at his tail, and then another, till the tail had a woeful expression indeed ; so, out of mercy, the pike was delivered from his persecutors, and turned into a pond, in which it is to be hoped there were none of these little scoundrels to bully and annoy their betters.

Perch and pike will not, however, refuse a stickleback, provided the spines be removed ; and it is one of the most dainty tit-bits you can offer to the former fish, being preferred to everything but a minnow.

Table Talk.

IT may interest those of our readers who have visited, or may visit, that miserable-looking room in the Tower of London, and listened to the doleful strain of the doleful old lady who describes the crown jewels, to have a full description of the crown of England. It contains one large ruby, irregularly polished ; one broad-spread sapphire, sixteen other sapphires, eleven emeralds, four rubies, 1,363 brilliant diamonds, 1,273 rose diamonds, 147 table diamonds, four drop-shaped pearls, and 273 other pearls. The crown was made in 1838, with jewels taken from old crowns, and others furnished by command of her Majesty.

DOGS, we all know, are extremely sagacious ; but we can scarcely credit the following story :—A few days since, as a train was tearing along, the driver noticed a large Newfoundland dog on the line. He blew the whistle, but the dog stood his ground ; and thinking something was wrong, the engineer whistled down brakes, and fortunately the train was pulled up within a few feet of the dog. It seems that a waggon and team of horses had attempted to go over the line at a crossing, when by some means the wheels caught in the metals, causing a delay. The waggoner heard the train approaching round a curve, and rushed down the line to stop it. His dog was, however, before him ; for, taking in the situation, he dashed round the curve, causing the driver to check the train in time, which it would have been impossible to do after seeing the waggoner himself.

HERE is a theme, we submit, well worth the notice of an M.P. in want of a subject for ventilating some of his bottled-up eloquence. To wit, poison. How often we read of deaths from misadventure, caused by swallowing poison, mistaking it for some other compound. Of course, if ordinary precautions were observed, such accidents could not occur ; but as we are naturally prone to be careless, steps should be taken to reduce them to a minimum. We would suggest that, in addition to the label "Poison," a distinct bottle of a peculiarly striking character should be used—say square, of an unusual colour, or in some way constructed so as to immediately call attention to its contents. If the subject were taken up, we feel confident some inventive genius would come forward with an original idea ; and if the life of only one poor little waif were saved, the time and trouble devoted to it would not be wasted.

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER VIII.—THE STRANGER.

THE sound which startled Zerina and her father was the sharp, short crack of a pistol shot, followed by a cry of pain.

"Oh, father!" cried the girl, "some one has been shot in the street. The report was close to the house. There—the cry again!"

There was a distinct though faint cry audible as she spoke. The man stood listening intently, his face pallid, his hands trembling.

"This desperate neighbourhood!" he muttered between his clenched teeth. "Some of the fiends of Tiger Bay at their work, no doubt."

"But you will see what has happened?" the girl pleaded.

"Not I."

"Not when there is a chance that we may render aid to some dying man?"

"And expose ourselves to incalculable danger. Have I not impressed on you that our only chances of safety in this lawless part lie in the secrecy of our movements? Why, if it were known that I had often treasures in this house of thousands of pounds in value, do you think we should lie safely in our beds? Let what will happen, we must take no heed."

Before Zerina could reply, a fresh sound attracted their attention. It was a knocking at the door of the house repeated sharply seven times—twice—once—twice—once—once. This was the irregular order of the knocks.

The effect they produced on the two listeners was widely different. Agitation was visible in the face of the man, while that of the girl gleamed with sudden delight. He trembled as if his own hand had perpetrated the deed of which they had spoken, while she pressed her clasped hands to her heart, to still its tumultuous beating.

"These are our friends," Zerina cried; "that is the signal. Shall I admit them? I have no fears."

"No," was the quick answer; "give me the lamp. There may be danger below. Thrust the lace into the box, and—to your book—to your book."

He took a proffered lamp and quitted the room, nervously agitated. Zerina gathered up the rolls of lace on which he had been occupied, dropped them into the trunk, and thrust it under the table. Then recovering the fallen volume from the floor, she threw herself into the great chair by the fire, and appeared absorbed in reading. But in truth she was listening intently.

She was listening for footsteps and for voices: for footsteps light and buoyant, for voices gay and exhilarating, and both inexpressibly dear to her heart. But for these voices, these footsteps, she listened in vain.

There was a long interval, interminable in its length as it appeared to her, and then two persons began to ascend the stairs leading to the only occupied room in the house. One of these, as she knew, was her father. The other was a stranger. She had never listened to his steps before.

At length the feeble glimmer of the lamp illuminated the darkness beyond the open door, and the lace-mender appeared, followed by a stranger. The face of the first

was of a death-like pallor, while that of the second was hidden, partly by a sealskin cap tied under the chin, partly behind the collar of a reefing jacket.

"My daughter Zerina!" said the polite occupant of the house, pointing to the young girl by the fire.

The stranger either did not hear or was too much preoccupied to attend to the introduction. He simply dropped into the chair nearest the door, and tore open his closely-buttoned jacket with a fierce impatience, as if its tightness were intolerable to him.

"Give me brandy, Marco," he muttered, in a hoarse voice.

Marco went to a sideboard, and produced an antique bottle, rich with designs in burnished gold. He also brought forward a Venetian glass with a twisted stem.

"Cheer up, man," he whispered; "this will revive you."

The man started up, and snatched the bottle from the hand raised to pour out a part of its contents.

"You forget," he exclaimed.

The eyes of the two met.

And while they were thus face to face, the stranger dashed the bottle fiercely upon the hearthstone, shattering it into a thousand pieces.

CHAPTER IX.—AUNT EFFRA IS SHOCKED.

IN spite of the strange interruption in its close, Eva Knowles was rendered supremely happy by that scene in the library in Arlington-square, when Edmund Harcourt avowed his love for her.

The moment of such an avowal is that of the supreme happiness of a woman's life.

Eva realized this, and in the intensity of the sudden rapture which sent an electrical influence through her whole frame, she scarcely heeded the incoherent explanation Ruby gave on recovering consciousness, or Harcourt's obvious uneasiness.

That Ruby, entering by the secret door, should have been frightened at finding two persons in the library, which she had supposed deserted, and should have fainted, was to her innocent mind a sufficient explanation of all that had happened. And Harcourt did not attempt to disturb that impression.

During the drive home, she shrank back in a corner of the carriage, to think over what had happened, to nurse and fondle and delight herself with her secret, as she might have cherished and fondled a dove in her bosom. It was such a delight to know what she knew, to recall how it all had come about—by what stages the avowal had been made, in what words, in what tones, and with what looks. This delight was enhanced, too, by the sense of its being thus far her own secret—all her own—to dream over and rejoice over as she would. A secret shared is only half a secret—

"Bare, bald, and tawdry as a finger'd moth."

Of course, the time must come, and that speedily, when she must make the proud avowal of what had happened. She must, she knew, take her father into her confidence, and submit the case for Aunt Effra's judgment, and by degrees all the world must know it. For that she was prepared. But she felt how much more precious the hidden secret was than it could be even when shared by one confidant only, and so gave herself up wholly and absolutely to its intense enjoyment.

And no word escaped her lips that night.

It was not till the next evening that she could make up her mind to speak. Circumstances were then favourable.

It was a home dinner—no visitors. Papa sat by the fireside in the dining-room, in the critical enjoyment of his port. Aunt Effra reclined on the other side of the fireplace, shading her face from the heat with a feather screen. Eva occupied a low stool between the two, the firelight shining on her hair, which it turned to richer gold, and suffusing her complexion with a rosy hue.

There was a dead silence.

Papa was holding his glass so that the fire gave a tremulous heart of flame to the wine.

"It is pleasant to dine alone," said Eva, suddenly, feeling that the time had come, and sending out this pilot remark to see if she could trust her voice.

"Pleasant!" retorted Aunt Effra, with asperity. "Oh, yes, of course—to children!"

"Effra, my dear," interposed her brother, recalled from a train of wandering reflections, "do not be so bitter. Taking so much of that thin claret does you no good. I've said so fifty times."

"And what has been my answer, Edgar? That life in France has not been thrown away upon me. It has taught me to detest your fiery ports and sherries, and all such barbarities. But, there, the English are so stupid!"

"Well, well, Effra—have it your own way," was the good-natured answer; "only you need not be so sharp with Eva. She is no longer a child, remember."

"Oh, as to that," retorted the lady, "she would be considered one still in any reasonable country."

"In France, for instance?"

"Certainly, but the English are so—"

"Yes, yes, so you've protested any time these twenty years. But I'm afraid we must begin to regard my darling as a grown woman."

"Putting such ideas into the child's head!" Aunt Effra retorted, with a bounce.

"Aunty, dear," said Eva, slipping on to one knee, and seizing a thin hand, clustering with rings, between her own two rosy palms, "pray forgive papa, because—because he is not alone in his opinion."

"Indeed!"

"No; Captain Harcourt, who made himself so agreeable to you last night, quite agrees with him."

"You think so?"

"I am sure of it, for he told me so only last night. Oh, papa, dear"—she managed to take one of his hands now, without releasing her hold of the lady's—"papa and aunty dear, he was so kind and flattering to me last night. He told me he had always loved me better than himself, better than anybody in the world; and he said so many pleasant things, and at last—at last he asked leave to see you, and to gain your consent, and—and—"

Aunt Effra snatched away her hand. She wanted both to hold up in amazement.

"Upon my word, Edgar," she exclaimed, "you have brought your girl to something!"

The father drew his child, his Eva, the apple of his eye, towards him, until her face, suffused in blushes, nestled close to his breast. Then he said—

"I am afraid, Eva darling, that Mr. Harcourt has

not acted quite discreetly. But why have you withheld all this from me so long?"

She hesitated. It was so hard to make him understand her real feelings, with Aunt Effra sitting there so grim.

"Because," she said at length, "I could not tell how you might receive what I had to say, and I had not the courage to have my happiness shattered by any word or look of coldness or disapproval. It was very wrong, I fear; but, indeed, I could not help it."

"The step Captain Harcourt has taken," was the reply, "is a most serious one. His rashness in making you an offer of his hand—"

"Most indecent!" cried Aunt Effra.

"I hardly see that, Effra," returned her brother; "but I confess that it would have been more gratifying to my feelings had a little more time elapsed, and had there been a tacit understanding between us that it was agreeable to me to receive him as a suitor for my daughter's hand."

"But I love him—oh, so dearly," Eva pleaded, "and I am sure he returns it with all his heart; and if he has spoken out before he should have done, perhaps it was because he could read my love for him in my face. If he has been rash, he is not to blame; it is I who am to blame, and you must not think harshly of him for what is all my fault."

Aunt Effra interposed.

"Now, Edgar," she exclaimed, with a triumphant wave of the feather screen, "now I hope you are satisfied that the French are not so foolish as you are pleased to consider them. In Paris this could not have happened. There a young lady never sees the young man who is destined to become her husband until her parents introduce him. There a young lady never brings a scandal of this sort on her family. But the English are so excessively stupid."

Scarcely heeding this homily, the doting father held his daughter's face between his hands, and pressed a kiss on her white brow.

"You are not angry with me, papa?" she asked.

"No, Eva," he replied, "not angry; if there is blame it is on me that it should fall, for I might have seen that sooner or later something of this kind must happen. But what you tell me startles me. I know little of Edmund Harcourt."

"But you have always liked him?"

"As a companion, a visitor, a gentlemanly fellow; but it has never occurred to me to regard him in the light in which he now presents himself."

"Oh, he is so manly, so noble! To know him is to love him!" cried the enthusiastic girl.

"Rubbish!" ejaculated Aunt Effra, shortly—"mere insular folly."

"I am afraid," remarked her brother, addressing his daughter more especially, "that we fathers are less apt to regard manliness, nobility of character, and similar qualities, as of paramount importance, than we are questions of birth, family, position, means and so forth. Now, on these points, I know little of Edmund Harcourt. However, since matters have gone so far, and I see that your happiness is involved in what may happen, I will make such inquiries as may be necessary, and prepare myself to receive him when he favours us with a call, and to give him an answer one way or another."

Eva raised her flushed face with a troubled look in it.

"One way or another?" she repeated. "Oh, you can't mean that you believe he is unworthy?"

"On that I can say nothing."

"But I will stake my life that he is true, and noble, and all that is generous, and kind, and good."

"We shall see. But remember, darling, that whatever may happen I shall look only to your happiness."

"And the family honour, I should hope," said Aunt Effra. "Captain Harcourt may be a gentleman. I don't say he isn't (though he isn't of the Harcourt family, I've found out that), but he is a flirt, a downright flirt, pretending to pay me the attentions he did, and all the while wanting to wheedle himself into my favour for Eva's sake; and I never knew any good come of a he-flirt yet, though people won't believe it. But, there, as I have said before to-night, the English are so stupid."

It is possible that the good lady, who was not a little irate at the thought that she would no longer be able to keep up the fiction of her own youth when it came to be recognized that Eva was a woman and "engaged," would have gone on in her favourite vein for no inconsiderable time, but at this juncture a servant entered, and presented a card.

It was Eva who extended her hand for it, and read the name in a surprised tone—

"Mr. Randolph Agnew."

Harcourt's bosom friend and inseparable companion there alone! It was most singular. But that was not all, for in her heart of hearts she had all the evening expected Harcourt himself, and to surprise was added disappointment, which found expression in the tone in which she bade the servant show him up.

The young visitor entered the room with manifest haste and perturbation. Even by the light of the fire it was possible to see that his face was deadly in its pallor, and that there was a startled look in his eyes.

Eva rose to her feet, and looked at him in dismay.

"I must apologize for intruding, ladies," he said; "but I know that it was my friend Harcourt's intention to have called this evening, and I thought he might possibly be expected. Something has happened which will prevent his coming—"

"Something happened!" they all exclaimed, in a breath.

"Well, yes; something startling. In a word, he has been shot at."

"And killed?" cried Eva.

"No, only wounded."

"And is the wound serious?" Mr. Knowles inquired, with less consternation than his daughter displayed.

"We hope not."

"But pray how did this happen?"

"In the strangest manner. He was walking down a street, when there was the report of a pistol, and a bullet struck him in the arm."

"Shot in the street! Pray, where did this happen?"

The young man hesitated, and looked confused; then recovering himself, said—

"I have been too much agitated to inquire."

Eva interposed.

"You are quite sure there is no danger?" she asked.

"None is apprehended," was the answer.

"But he will be in pain. It will be a long illness, and perhaps there will be no one to care for him and

to nurse him. Oh, aunt dear, would it be so very wrong if—"

"If you went to a single gentleman's chambers? Horrible!"

"No, aunty, not me. But I thought that perhaps if you—"

"ME!"

The word came from her lips in a shriek. Overcome at the bare idea (and, perhaps, quite as much by the implied reflection on her maturity), the lady, who had risen, staggered a step or two as if about to fall, and inclining towards Randolph Agnew, suffered one virgin arm to encircle his neck with affectionate rigidity.

Queer Cards.

CHAPTER IV.—A BETTER MIND.

"I NEVER heard a word from mother, and began almost to think she was dead; for it was more than three years since she went away. I'd made up my mind often to go and try to find her out, but somehow father got hold of it. I'd forgotten the name of the place, and he wouldn't tell me, for he said if I went down there her friends would give up doing anything for her; so I heard nothing.

"I often wondered what my father was doing for a living. If he had part in any more robberies, he never took me with him; and I couldn't for a long time make out who the gentlemen were that I used to go to meet now and then. I had to go to a certain place—sometimes a street corner, or, may be, a door of a tavern, or what not—and only just say to the person I saw there (accordin' to description), 'To-morrow night;' or 'They've got what you wanted;' or something of that sort.

"I found out what it all meant one day when I didn't expect it. My father had told me that he should want me to wait for him in the evening; that he should drive up in a cart, and that I was to open the door and let him in directly I heard the sound of the wheels. There was no love between us, I can promise you; so he offered to give me a shilling if I'd stay there and lend him a hand afterwards.

"I'll stay for nothing if you'll tell me what the game is," I said; "why shouldn't I know what all these messages mean, and what trade you're following?"

"It's a trade," says father, "that would soon be a pretty good one if you'd stick to me; these gentlemen are the customers, and they pay well for what I sell 'em."

"Well, tell me about it, and I'll go in for it if it aint housebreaking," I said; "for I'm tired of this, and I haven't earnt a shilling for this five days."

"Well, it's to get subjects for the doctors," says father.

"Subjects," I says, "what's that? You don't mean body-snatching?"

"Well, I should call it providing subjects for the benefit of science; that's what my customers calls it, and they ought to know. It's better to cut up a dead body than to kill a live one, I should say, aint it?"

"Somehow this sort of argufying seemed to make it a sort of respectable calling more than a crime; nobody was hurt if nobody found it out; the doctors were all ready to buy the 'subjects,' and they knew whether it

was right or not. It was a sort of easy way of shifting the blame on to somebody else, that; and as to its being against the law, that hadn't troubled me for a long time, nor father either. So I agreed to go out with him the next time.

"It's no good for me to go and tell you the dreadful sort o' work that went on for the next year or so; how we (three of us) used to lay our plans to find out where to go for subjects, and what awful means we used.

"It grew to be dangerous work at last, and a blessing it was so; for there's no knowin' what wouldn't have come of it else. Burking was getting desperately common, as p'raps most of you can remember as boys, so that we were obliged to go further out of London when we got an order for a subject.

"It was one night in the spring-time that we started off to go to a little place where there was a quiet churchyard, somewhere about ten miles out of town; and, as the job was to be well paid for, we hired a fast horse, and drove down about twelve o'clock. I'd been regularly miserable all day, for I'd had a dream the night before that mother come to me with both her hands before her face, crying; that I couldn't get her to look at me, and that I knew it was because of the life I'd been leading. Well, after that, the dream changed, and I thought I was in the churchyard along with father and another man; they'd just got up a coffin and left it there on the ground, so what should I do, I thought, but stoop down and look what was the name wrote on the plate. As I was stooping, I heard a knockin' inside the coffin, and took up the pick and broke the lid off in bits in my hurry and fear, lest the person buried alive should really die before air got to 'em. When the lid came off, there lay mother; and she got up and went out of my sight, and the coffin shut up again of its own accord.

"I woke up trembling, and got a light, and sat down on my bed; and there, all of a sudden, seemed to come to myself, and wake up in my soul to all the misery that I'd never felt till now. Then I fell a-crying, and trying to think of all the things Miss Rose used to tell me; but they'd grown all confused, and I fell down on my knees by the side of the bed, and hid my face in the clothes. I don't know whether I prayed, but I got up with a determination, and vowed that I'd give up this sort of life, and go right away somewhere where I should be known to nobody.

"When father had brought Big Jim with him in the evening to go down to the churchyard, I told 'em that I'd have nothing to do with the job, and that I meant to give it up altogether. I even began to persuade them to give it up too, and try to earn an honest living; but all I got for my pains was a blow from a quart pot that cut a gash across my eyebrow.

"Well, it ended in my agreeing to drive them down, and they both swore that they wouldn't ask me to do anything except mind the cart. This was what I wanted, for I'd made up my mind to make a start from there, and leave them all for ever.

"It was a regular quiet country place, as quiet as though everything for miles had left it for the dead to sleep in. There was a light wind out, too, and the place was full of trees near the wicket gate where we pulled up, so that we got completely under shadow, and the cart almost hid.

"Father and Big Jim took out the spades and ropes,

and left me sitting there, only waiting till they'd begun to work before I struck away across the fields, and went I didn't know or care where.

"I was leaning with my head on my hands on the shaft of the cart, and wondering whether I should ever see mother again, or if I could get work or must 'list for a soldier, when I felt the horse shy from the foot-path near the road, and looking up at the same moment, saw a woman coming round by his head.

"I couldn't see her features, for she had a veil all over her bonnet, but she stopped and looked at me quite close. There was a lantern in the cart, and I took it and held it up so that the light shone on her face. I dropped it, and fell on my knees, for it was my mother herself, and I thought my dream had come true; but she caught hold of me by the arm, and dragged me under the trees. Oh, so thin and wasted she looked!

"Bill, Bill, my own boy, that I've prayed for night and day, where have you been these years? I've only lived to see you again, and now, for the sake of a dying woman, come with me."

"I followed her till we got to a cottage about a mile off, where she had some friends. It seemed she'd been there on a visit, and was going home again by a coach that night, and the very coach was coming up as we got to the door, so she only went in for a bundle, and then we both got inside.

"There were no other passengers, and we talked on, she crying bitterly all the time. Then I learnt that she'd written letters to me to Mr. Feene's over and over again, till at last, thinking I'd gone away, she'd given up all hopes of seeing me again, and left home after father had ill-used her one night, and he'd kept her in the street, and refused to let her in again. Then she went down into Hertfordshire to her friends, where we were going, and they'd made much of her, and persuaded her to stay there.

"Father had sent word that he'd let 'em keep her as long as they liked, and promised never to come near, but swore if ever she went back to him, he'd do her a mischief.

"She said she'd been thinking of me all the night before, for she'd no sooner got to her friend's than she heard a report how a grave was to be robbed in the churchyard. The constables were down there with a pal of Big Jim's, who'd split upon 'em, and she suspected father would be in it. She'd gone out to try and get him to know it, but the officers had got the start of her, and gone round by the front gate; but she had a sort of feeling that I might be there too, and found me as I tell you.

"When I told mother of my dream and my oath, and she had cried and prayed upon my shoulder with words that I repeated after her, we agreed that I should go home with her to her cousin's, where she was living, and ask them to let me sleep that night in one of the stable lofts, till we could see what was to be done. One thing I'd made up my mind to, and that was to stay with her as long as she lived, if I could anyhow earn enough to keep body and soul together.

"Our friends heard my story; and though, of course, they seemed a bit suspicious, agreed to give me a fresh start, and not to say anything in the village about what I'd been doing. I was to go out the next day and try to get a common job of labour at some of the farms

round. I earned just threepence for moving some stones out of a shed, and that took me all the morning; but I got a hunk of bread and cheese, and so went home with the money in my pocket.

"When I went in, there was an old man sitting talking to my mother, and I found that they'd been waiting for me for some time.

"As I went in, mother said, 'This is William,' and the old man got up and took hold of me by the arm.

" 'Well,' he said, 'I've been a talking to your mother, Master William, and I think I might give you a little work as would make shift to keep you with odd jobs now and then. The fact is, I'm the sexton of these two villages; and, as I aint quite so young as I was forty years ago, I'm to have an assistant of my own choosing. It aint much, I know, but it's a crust; and, as I've neither chick nor child, you can lodge at my house. You'll come to-morrow morning, and I'll just show you what there is to do. Will you?'

"And, after bidding us good night, away he went.

"I felt as though it was all a dream. I was pleased enough, of course; but somehow it seemed awful, and like a sort of punishment to me, that I should be put to the duty of burying the dead.

"I said never a word, but sat down opposite mother, with my head upon my hands. Mother said nothing, but she got down the Bible, and read some verses that seemed to put a new light upon the work I'd undertook to do.

"I began to think this was the way I was to be put upon my trial whether I'd made up my mind to lead a better life; and I went to bed happier than I'd ever been since I was a child.

"It was a quiet life, and mother seemed to get better for a long time; but when any of us noticed it, she'd shake her head and smile in a way that used often to give me the headache. Still, she didn't suffer much pain, and we were happy together, for I'd gained the respect of her relations somehow; and, though I had a struggle to settle down to the humdrum sort of life, mother was a sheet-anchor to me that I wouldn't have lost my hold on for the world; and then I was learning something that's been a blessin' to me in this world, as well as what I believe about in the next.

"I've made many a crust out of what my old master, the sexton, taught me; for he was a regular doctor. I don't mean a certified doctor, but better—that is, he knew all about the properties of herbs and plants, and what they were all good for; and rare physic and healing ointment he used to mix up for the poor people, and never charge 'em a penny for it.

"There was no regular doctor nearer than the market town, eleven miles off, and, I take it, that's what kept the folks so healthy; but they always used to run to old Master Pegrew if there was anything the matter with 'em.

"Well, the old man used to let me help him at times; and often in fine weather we'd go out a gatherin' herbs for the whole day, and then go home and dry 'em, or mix 'em into lotions or what not. I soon got to be able to do a little myself, and took a spell at all the books I could find; for he had half of 'em at his fingers' ends—I mean the herbals—especially that one of Culpepper's, with all the plates in it.

"He was right down a clever man. I know a little about doctorin' myself, what with his teachin' and the

things I picked up abroad. That old knapsack's full of better physic than you'd pay half-a-crown a bottle for. But old Pegrew! why, I often used to think that he was like King Solomon in the Bible, that knew all the plants, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall.

The Four Mustangs.

A LARGE crowd had gathered in front of the Court-house at Santa Rosa, attracted by the moving through the streets of one of the old buildings from John Taylor's lot. The building was about fifty feet long—had been mounted on four wooden truck wheels, with a pair of waggon wheels in front, to which a team of six stout mules were hitched.

After many tugs, the old house started, the driver yelling and the mud flying all over the side-walk, scattering the crowd, and bespattering the Goddess of Liberty on the dome of the Court-house. After an hour's time, they succeeded in dragging the building about 150 feet. Within a few feet of the crossing from the Recorder's office to Evans's store they stuck fast, owing to a slight rise in the street made by the crossing. The driver shouted himself hoarse, the six big mules floundered about in the mud; but not an inch could they budge the old building.

The crowd increased, and bets were made that they would never start it again. A teamster from the red-woods, with four mustangs, had stopped to watch the performance—a smooth-faced, athletic young fellow. He said nothing—until roused, perhaps, by a splash of mud, he walked to the front, wiping his face on his hands, and said—

"I aint got but three dollars; but I'll bet every darned cent of it that my four mustangs will start that rookery out of there."

There was a derisive laugh from the crowd, and a half-dozen takers.

"Put up the money," said the teamster. "If I had more, or knew where to borrow any, I'd 'see' the last one of you."

The bet was taken; Jerry Farmer held stakes. The six mules were taken off, and the four mustangs hitched on.

Meanwhile the interest of the crowd increased, and bets were freely made, with big odds against the teamster.

When ready to start, the excitement was at a high pitch. The little mustangs bent to their work; but the house did not move. He started them again. No go. Nothing daunted, the teamster, in answer to the crowd, who were chaffing him from all quarters, said—

"If Jim Shaw was here, I'd get the money, and bet fifty dollars that I could start it. I aint got 'em warmed up yet."

"I'll bet you fifty dollars against one of your horses," said a well-known liveryman, "that you can't pull it five feet."

"It's a whack," said the teamster; "put up the coin."

The money was handed to Jerry Farmer, the stakeholder.

Another tug. The little mustangs seemed to hump themselves; but it was no go.

"I'll bet you another fifty agin that mare's mate, you can't do it," said the liveryman, eagerly.

"Done," said the teamster. "I'll bet the last hoof of 'em on it, and you may swing me to one of them oaks in the plaza if they can't do it."

By this time the excitement was running high among the lookers-on, and side bets were numerous. One offered to bet a hundred dollars he could not do it, and the teamster got a friend to take the bet for him.

Those who had watched the teamster now noticed a change in his manner—a curious smile on his countenance. He walked up to each horse successively, tapped him on the back with the butt-end of his black-snake, and said to each—

"Stand up there now, in your harness."

For the first time he mounted the near-wheeler, seized a single rein, turned his team off "Haw!" swung them back "Gee!" cracked his whip, gave a yell, and, as they straightened, the unwieldy load rose over the obstruction like an old hulk over a swell at sea, greeted by a burst of applause from the bystanders.

The mustangs pulled for about twenty-five feet, and he stopped them.

"You see, boys," said the teamster, as he got down, "I'm with 'em all the time, and know jest what they can do, and"—with a childlike smile—"jest when to make 'em do it."

As he dropped the stake in his overalls pocket, he said—

"I'd give fifty dollars out of that ar stake if Jim Shaw had been here to see that team pull. Jerry, I'm dry. Let's go over to Buck Williamson's, and take a drink."

When he returned to his mustangs, to start out of town, he threw up his hat, and said—

"Whoop-la! I've teamed in Walla-Walla, Nevada, and Arkinsaw; and with my slab-sided plugs kin out-pull any six mules in Sanoma County."

As he mounted his wheeler he sung out to the crowd—

"I snaked that old tumble-down out of the mud, and have got the coin to show it. Hooray for Arkinsaw! Whar's them mules? Git erp!"—cracked his whip, turned the corner, and passed out of sight.

Fleshy Plants.

THE true naturalist must certainly be one of the most enviable of beings, for, in addition to the every day life of ordinary man, he leads another life which runs side by side with it—a life of wonder, of dealing with the marvellous, and of constant peering into the mysteries of nature. He learns how life is preserved by animal and vegetable, how the inoffensive learns to protect itself by assimilating its colours to those of its surroundings; while the weak plant, as it grows upwards, secures itself a place in the light and warmth by means of tendrils, or, where these do not exist, by curling a leaf stalk round the first thing that offers for a support, and, retaining its hold here, offers its beautiful blossom to the heat of the sun, and the visits of passing beetle or fly.

Perhaps in no country are the wonders of vegetation more striking than in America—in the dense, moist forests, where, amidst a steamy heat, the luxuriant foli-

age of the trees is of that rich dark green which tells of being well supplied with warmth and nutriment; and on the wildly sterile mountain sides, where the sun's rays beat down on the rocks and loose sand and stones, and where it seems impossible for vegetable life to exist.

It is in these wildly sterile regions that Nature has displayed a plan of her own; and on ascending from the land of marsh, river, and rich forest to the high, dry mountain side, the traveller is astounded at that which meets his view. He expects to find here short, dry mosses, tiny, hard, spinous plants, root-wedged amidst rocks and stones, and shrivelling under the burning sun.

He expects all this, but instead he finds a growth peculiar to the region—he finds prickly, spinous plants, it is true, but they are of a fleshy nature. Their roots are forced in amidst sand and stones, but mostly as a means of holding the plant fast, for its nutriment is derived from the copious dews which fall by night from the moisture-charged air, after undergoing a process in the day that should have dried and shrivelled them into dust.

It is in these regions that the cactus tribe exist—fleshy, juicy, moisture-exuding plants, some of which afford to man and beast quite a store of insipid sap or water, which is invaluable in these parching regions. It must be recollected that these plants grow in climes where water does not fall from the heavens for months together; and it is in regarding these that the wonderful provision is seen by which each plant becomes its own storehouse of moisture, and is thus able to set the desiccating beams of the sun at naught.

There is another tribe of plants, though, common in Peru amongst the most sterile heights, and its representatives are encountered in the wildest and most unfertile places, where stone and rock are piled up in wild confusion, and the traces of old volcanic disturbance are visible on every hand. It is upon the disintegration of the old lava of these eruptions of a bygone history of the globe that these strange plants exist. They are similar in appearance to the well-known fleshy series of tongue-like, prickly-leaved plants common in some gardens, and known as aloes—respecting which the legend runs that they blow once in a hundred years, and occasionally one hears of a specimen being in bloom, though the probabilities are that they never blossom at all in our uncongenial clime, but remain barren and sterile to the end.

It was into a tub containing one of these exceedingly prickly plants that the celebrated Mr. Sam Weller upset the notorious Mr. Job Trotter, by rushing out as that individual was going down the steps from the front door of the magisterial Nupkins; but whether those two aloes in tubs ever bloomed history does not tell.

The Peruvian plant, commonly known amongst the people as *quellusaca*, is a magnificent object in regions that are of the wildest. Its leaves are thick, fleshy, and massive; their edges serrated, and armed with stout spines; while the central spike of gorgeous pinky flowers affords a sight once seen never to be forgotten. These plants are perfect giants amongst their kind; and from them the Indians distil a potent spirit, while the leaves, beaten out and dried, supply material from which some of their coarse fabrics are woven.



"THE QUELLUSACSA."—(Page 150.)

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER XLIII.—A PROPOSAL.

FRANK PRATT had no sooner gone than Richard began to stride hastily up and down the little room, to the great endangering of Mrs. Fiddison's furniture. As he neared the window, he glanced across, to see Netta sitting there at work; and a faint smile and blush greeted him.

"Poor girl," he muttered. "But, no; it's nonsense. She can't think it. Absurd! She's so young—so ill. There, it's childish, and I should be a vain fool if I thought so."

He stood thinking for a few moments, and as he paused there was the rattle of wheels in the street, and Sam Jenkles drove his Hansom to the door and stopped, gave the horse in charge of a boy, and went in.

The next minute Richard had crossed too, for a plan had been formed on the instant.

Mrs. Jenkles met him at the door, and at his wish led him to where Sam was seated at a table, hurriedly discussing a hot meal.

"Drops in, sir, if ever I drives a fare in this direction, and the missus generally has a snack for me. Eh, sir? Oh, no, sir. All right, I'll wait," he said, in answer to a question or two.

And then Richard ascended the stairs, knocked and entered, to find that mother and daughter had just risen from their needlework, Mrs. Lane to look grave, Netta with a bright look in her eyes, and too vivid a red in either cheek.

"Ah, you busy people," he said, cheerily, "what an example you do set me! How's our little friend to-day?"

The bright look of joy in Netta's face faded slightly as she heard their visitor speak of her as he would of some child; but there was a happy, contented aspect once more, as she placed her hand in his, and felt his frank pressure.

"Mrs. Lane," said Richard, speaking gaily, "I'm like the little boy in the story—I'm idle, and want some one to come and play with me; but I hope for better luck than he."

Mother and daughter looked at him wonderingly.

"I've come to tell you," he said, "that the sun shines brightly overhead; there's a deep blue sky, and silvery clouds floating across it; and six or seven miles out northward there are sweet-scented wild flowers, waving green trees, all delicious shade; the music of song-birds, the hum of insects, and views that will gladden your hearts after seeing nothing but smoke and chimney-pots. I am nature's ambassador, and I am here to say 'Come.'"

As he spoke, the work fell from Netta's hands, her eyes dilated, and a look of intense glad longing shone from her soft, oval face, while she hung upon her mother's lips—till, hearing her words, the tears gathered in her eyes, and she bent her head to conceal them.

Mrs. Lane's words were very few; they were grateful, but they told of work to be done by a certain time, and she said it was impossible.

"But it would do you both good. Miss Netta there wants a change badly," said Richard; "and you haven't heard half my plan. Jenkles has his cab at the door,

and I propose a drive right out into the country, and when we get back you will ask me to tea. It will be a squeeze, but you will forgive that."

Poor Mrs. Lane's face looked drawn in its piteous aspect. She felt that such a trip would be like so much new life to her child; but she could not go, and she shook her head.

"It may not be etiquette, perhaps," said Richard, quietly; "but I shall ask you to waive that, and let me take Netta here. You know it will do her good; and she will have Mr. Jenkles, as well as your humble servant, to take care of her."

Mrs. Lane looked him searchingly in the face, which was as open as the day; and then, glancing at Netta, she saw her parted lips, and look of intense longing. The refusal that had been imminent passed away, and laying her hand upon the young man's arm, she said, softly—

"I will trust you."

There was something almost painful in the look of joy in Netta's face as, with trembling eagerness, she threw her arms round her mother, and then, with the excitement of a child, hurried away to put on hat and mantle.

"I shall be back directly," she exclaimed.

Richard's heart gave one heavy painful throb as he turned for an instant at the door.

Mrs. Lane laid her hand upon his arm as soon as they were alone, and once more looked searchingly into his face.

"I ought not to do this," she said, pitifully. "You're almost a stranger; but it is giving her what she has so little of—pleasure; more, it is like giving her life. You know—you see how ill she is?"

"Poor child, yes!" said Richard.

"Child?"

"Yes," said Richard, gravely. "I have always looked upon her as a child—or, at least, as a young, innocent girl. Mrs. Lane, I tell you frankly, for I think I can read your feelings—every look, every attention of mine towards that poor girl has been the result of pity. If you could read me, I think you would never suspect me of trifling."

"I am ready to trust you," she said. "You will not be late. The night air would be dangerous for her—hush!"

"I'm ready!" exclaimed Netta, joyfully.

And as she appeared framed in the doorway of the inner room, her dark hair cast back, eyes sparkling, and the flush as of health upon her cheeks, and lips parted to show her pure white teeth, Richard's heart gave another painful throb, and he thought of Frank Pratt's words; for it was no child that stood before him, but a very beautiful woman.

"You'll be back before dark, my darling?" said Mrs. Lane, tenderly.

"Oh, yes," cried Netta, excitedly. "Mr. Lloyd will take such care of me; but—"

The joy faded out of her countenance, and she clung to her mother, looking from her to the work.

"What is it, my dear?" said Mrs. Lane, stroking her soft dark hair.

"It's cruel to go and leave you here at work," sobbed the girl.

"What! when you are going to get strength, and coming back more ready to help me?" said Mrs. Lane,

cheerfully. "There, go along! Take care of her, Mr. Lloyd."

Richard had been to the head of the stairs, and spoken to Sam, who was already on his box; and as the young man offered his arm, Netta took it, with the warm, soft blush returning, and she stole a look of timid love at the tall, handsome man who was to be her protector.

The next minute she was in the cab, Richard had taken his place at her side, and Sam essayed to start as the good-bye nods were given.

"Lor!" said Mrs. Jenkles, her woman's instinct coming to the fore, "what a lovely pair they do make!"

At the same moment, on the opposite side of the way, a lady with a widow's cap cocked back on her head gazed from behind a curtain, wiped her eyes on a piece of crape, and said, with a sigh—

"And him the handsomest and quietest lodger I ever had!"

Meanwhile, in answer to every appeal from Sam Jenkles, Ratty was laying his ears back, wagging his tail, and biting at nothing.

"Don't you be skeared, miss," said Sam, through the little roof-trap, "it's on'y his fun. Get on with yer, Ratty—I'm blowed if I aint ashamed on yer. Jest ketch hold of his head, and lead him arf a dozen yards, will yer, mate?" he continued, addressing a man, after they had struggled to the end of the street. "Thanky."

For the leading had the desired effect, and Ratty went off at a trot to Pentonville-hill.

"Blest if I don't believe that was Barney," said Sam to himself, looking back, and he was quite right, for that gentleman it was; and as soon as the cab was out of sight he had taken a puppy out of one pocket of his velveteen coat, looked at it, put it back, and then slouched off to where he could take an omnibus, on whose roof he rode to Piccadilly, where he descended, made his way into Jermyn-street, and then stopping at a private house, rang softly, took the puppy out of his pocket, a dirty card from another, and waited till the door was answered.

"Tell the captain as I've brought the dawg," he said to the servant, who left him standing outside; but returned soon after, to usher him into the presence of Captain Vanleigh, who smiled and rubbed his hands softly, as he wished Tiny Rea could have been witness of that which had been brought to him as news.

CHAPTER XLIV.—IN THE WOODS.

THE captain would have been more elate if he had been able to follow the fortunes of Sam Jenkles' cab; for having received his instructions, Sam bowled along by Euston-square in the direction of the Hampstead-road, till he had to go at a foot's pace on account of some alteration to the roadway, the result being that for a few moments the cab was abreast of a barouche containing four ladies, one of whom started, and said, in a quick whisper—

"Oh, look, Tiny, that's the church with the figures I told you about."

But Fin Rea was too late, her sister was leaning over the side of the carriage, gazing intently at Sam Jenkles' cab, and the dark-haired girl, with the wondrous colour and look of animation, looking so lovingly in her companion's face; and as the carriage swept on, unseen by the occupants of the cab, poor Tiny sank back, not fainting, but with a pitiful sigh and a look of stony

despair that made Fin clasp her hands, as she set her little white teeth together, and muttered—

"The wretch!"

Lady Rea saw nothing of this; but Aunt Matty, who was beside her, did, and a look of quiet triumph came into her withered features. But nothing was said, and as for the cab, it rolled on and on quickly, till it came to the tree-shadowed hill beneath Lady Coutts' park, and then, after a long walk up to the top of Highgate-hill, on and on again, till London was far behind, the soft green meads and the sheltered lanes reached; and while Sam pulled up at a roadside public-house, amongst half a dozen fragrant, high-laden hay carts, Richard led off his charge, with sinking heart, over a stile, and away midst waving corn fields, bright with poppies and buglos; and by hedges wreathed with great white convolvuli, and the twining, tendrilled brionies, or wild clematis.

Richard was grave, and his heart sank as he saw the joyous air of the young girl by his side, felt the light touch of her little hand, and when he met her eyes read in them so much gentle, trusting love, that he felt as if he had been a scoundrel to her, and that he was about to blight her life.

He was not a vain man, and he had used no arts to gain the sympathy that it was easy to read in the sweet face beside him; but he could not help telling himself that it was but too plain; and he groaned in his heart as he thought of that which he had determined to say.

"Hark, listen!" cried the girl, as a lark rose from the corn close by. "Isn't it beautiful? How different to those poor caged things in our street. Look, too, at the green there—four, five, twenty different tints upon those trees. Oh, you are losing half the beauties of those banks! Look at them, scarlet with poppies! There, too, the crimson valerian. How beautiful the foxgloves are! Why, there's a white one. Who'd ever think that London could be so near!"

She stopped, panting, and held her hand to her side.

"You are tired?" he said, anxiously.

"Oh, no," she said, darting a grateful look in return for his sympathy—"it is nothing. I feel as if I should like to set off and run, but I think sometimes I am not so strong as I used to be. Mamma says I have outgrown my strength; but it is my cough."

She said these last words plaintively, and there was a sad, pinched look in her face as she gazed up at him; but it lit up again directly as she met his eager, earnest eyes fixed upon her, and her trembling little hand stole farther through his arm.

"That's right," he said, patting it—"lean on me. I'm big and strong."

"May I?" she said, softly.

"To be sure," he answered.

"It's very kind of you," she whispered, "and I like it. I go out so little, and yet I long to; and if I don't stay here long, I shall have seen so little of the world."

"Netta, my child," he exclaimed, "what are you saying?"

The girl's other hand was laid upon his arm, as they stood beneath a shady tree, and she looked up at him in a dreamy way.

"I think sometimes," she said, slowly, "that I shall not be here long. It's my cough, I suppose. It's so pleasant to feel, though, that people—some one cares for me; only it makes me feel that I shall not want to go."

"Come, come, this is nonsense," he said, cheerily. "Why, you're not an invalid."

"I should be, I think, if we were rich," she said, sadly. "But let's go on along by that high sand bank, where the flowers are growing; and there is a wood there, all deep shades of green."

"But you will be tired?"

"No, no; you said I might rest on you. I should not be weak if I could live out here, and dear mamma was not compelled to work. Poor mamma!"

They walked on in silence, and she leaned more heavily upon his arm. Twice their eyes met, and as hers fell before his, it was not until they had looked into them the sweet, pure love of her young heart. They were no fiery, rapturous glances—no looks of passionate ecstasy; but the soft, beaming maiden love of an innocent, trusting girl, whose young heart was opening, like a flower, to offer its fragrant sweets to the man who had first spoken gentle words to her—words that had seemed to her, who had not had girlhood's joys, like the words of love. And that young heart had opened under the influence, like the fragrant rosebud in the sun; but there was a fatal canker there, and as the flower bloomed, the withering was at hand.

"Let us stop here," she said, drinking in the beauty of the scene; "it is like being young again, when we were so happy—when mamma watched for papa's coming, and there seemed no trouble in life. Oh, it has been a cruel time!"

She shuddered, and clung to the arm which supported her.

"This is very wrong of me," she said, looking up, and smiling the next moment. "I ought not to talk of the past like that."

"Shall we sit down here?" he said, pointing to a fallen tree trunk.

And, with the low hum of the insects round them, they entered the edge of the wood.

He sat looking at her in silence for a few moments, and twice her eyes were raised to his with so appealing and tender a look that he felt unmanned. He had brought her there to tell her something, and her love disarmed him; so that he snatched at a chance to put off that which he wished to say.

"You were telling me of the happy past," he said. "You were well off once?"

"Yes, and so happy," said the girl, her eyes filling with tears. "I ought not, perhaps, to tell you, though."

"You may trust me, Netta," he said, taking her hand.

"I always felt that I could," she cried eagerly, as her face flushed more deeply, and her hand trembled in his; for he had again called her Netta, and her heart throbbed with joy, even though he was so grave. "Shall I tell you?"

"Yes—tell me; but are you weary?"

"Oh, no, no," she said, excitedly. "But I must not mention names. Mamma wishes ours kept secret, for she is very proud. Papa is an officer, and as I remember him first, he was so handsome, even as mamma was beautiful. We used to live in a pretty cottage, just outside town, and papa was so kind. But, how it came about I never knew, he gradually grew cold, and hard, and stern, so that I was afraid of him when he came to see us; and he used to be angry to mamma, and then stay away for weeks together, then months, till at last

we rarely saw him. The pretty cottage was sold, with everything in it—even my presents; and mamma and I lived in lodgings. And then trouble used to come about money; for poor mamma would be half-distracted when none was sent her, and this dreadful neglected state went on, till mamma said she could bear it no more. Then she used to go out and give lessons; but that was terribly precarious work, and soon after she used to work with her needle."

"And your father?" said Richard.

"Never came," said Netta—"at least, very rarely. But I ought not to tell you more."

"Can you not trust me?" he said, with a smile.

"Oh, yes, yes, yes," cried the girl, impetuously, and she nestled closer to him. "I can trust you. It was like this:—Papa was a Roman Catholic, and mamma had always brought me up in her own Protestant religion; and by degrees I found out he had made a point of that, and had told mamma that their marriage was void, as it had only been performed according to one church. He used to write and tell her that he was free, and that if she would give up every claim on him, and promise to write to that effect, he would settle a regular income upon her."

"And your mamma?"

"I heard her say once to herself that it would be disgracing me, and that she would sooner we starved. That is why we have worked so hard, and had to live in such dreadful places," said the girl, shuddering.

"My poor child!" he said, tenderly. "Yours has been a hard life, and you so delicate."

"I shall grow strong now," she said, half shyly; "but why do you call me child?"

She looked up in his face with a smile, half playful, half tender—a look that made him shiver.

"You are not cross with me?" she said, gazing at him piteously.

"Cross? No," he said, gently.

And he once more took her hand, trying hard to begin that which he had brought her there to tell, but as far off as ever. At the end of a minute, though, she gave him the opportunity, by saying naively—

"You have never told me anything about yourself. Mamma wondered what you were—so different to everybody we meet."

"Let me tell you, Netta," he said, earnestly. "And promise me this—that we are still to be great friends." She looked at him wonderingly.

"Yes, of course," she said. "Why should we not be? You have always been so kind."

He paused for a moment or two; and then, there in the calm of that shadowy wood, with the sunbeams coming like golden arrows through the leafy boughs, and the distant twitter of some bird for interruption, he told her of his own life and troubles, watching her bright, animated face as she listened eagerly, sometimes laying her hand confidently upon his arm, till his tale approached the chapters of his love; and now, impassioned in his earnestness, he half forgot the listener at his side, till, in the midst of his declaration of love and trust and fidelity to Valentina Rea, he became aware of a faint sigh, and he had just time to catch the poor girl as she was slipping from the tree trunk to the ground.

"Poor child!" he said, raising her in his arms, gazing in the pale face, and kissing her forehead. "It was a

cruel kindness, for Heaven knows I never thought of this."

He sat holding her for a few moments, as animation came slowly back, till at last her eyes opened, looking wonderingly in his; and then, as recollection returned, she put up her two hands as if in prayer, and said, piteously—

"Take me home—please, take me home."

"Netta, my child," cried Richard, sinking at her feet, "recollect your promise—that we were to be friends. I have hurt you—I have wounded you. I call God to witness that I never meant it!"

A sad smile quivered for a moment on her poor white lips, as he kissed her hands again and again; and then, as the full reality of all she had heard came upon her, she uttered a low, heart-breaking wail, and sank upon the ground amidst the ferns and grass, covered her face with her hands, and sobbed aloud.

"My God, what have I done?" exclaimed Richard, hoarsely. "Netta, my child, I tried to be kind to you, and it has all turned to gall and bitterness. For heaven's sake, tell me you forgive me—that you do not think me base and cruel. Netta, pray—pray speak to me."

She dropped her hands in her lap, and raised her blank white face to his.

"You believe me?" he cried, hoarsely.

"Yes, yes," she said, piteously. "It was my fault. I thought—I thought—"

"Hush, my poor darling!" he whispered, "I know what you would say. I should have known better."

"No," she said sweetly, and her trembling voice was so piteous that the tears welled from the strong man's eyes. "It was I who should have known better, Richard—I, who have only a few short months to stay on earth."

"Netta!" he cried, and his voice was wild and strange.

"Yes, it is true," she said, simply—"it is quite true; but you came like sunshine to my poor dark life, and I could not help it—I thought you loved me."

"And I do, my child, dearly, as I would a sister!" he exclaimed, passionately, as he raised her up, and kissed her forehead. "Netta, I would have given my right hand sooner than have caused you pain."

"Don't blame yourself," she said, softly, extricating herself from his arms; "I should have known better. Take me home—take me home!"

She caught at his arm after trying to walk alone, and looked pitifully in his face.

"You see," she whispered, "it was a dream—a dream; but so bright, and now—"

She reeled, and would have fallen but for the strong arm flung round her; and Richard held her for a few moments till she recovered.

"Richard," she whispered, sadly, "forgive me if I was unmaidenly and bold; but it seemed so short a time that I should be here, that I could not act as others do. But take me home—take me home."

She seemed half fainting, and raised her handkerchief to her lips, to take it down stained with blood. Then, shuddering slightly, she turned her face to his, smiled faintly, and laid one little thin hand upon his breast, before hanging almost inanimate upon his arm.

Richard uttered a groan as he raised her in his arms, and bore her rapidly into the lane, where, at the

distance of a hundred yards, stood the cab, with Ratty grazing comfortably, and Sam Jenkles dozing on his box.

"Taken ill—quick!" gasped Richard, as he lifted his burden into the vehicle. "Quick—London—the first doctor's."

The Man in the Open Air.

WHAT is the use of duckweed? As its name implies, ducks are very fond of it; but the feeding of these waddlers is not the only provision duckweed entails and secures. A man in Kent took a great aversion to this beautiful green vegetation. He would have none of it on his ponds. So he employed his labourers to skim it off the surface of the waters as fast as it grew, and when the hot weather came, as it did that year in earnest, his neighbours had plenty of water for their cattle, while his ponds were dry, or contained nothing but mud. Duckweed secures water from the active agency of evaporation, and thus a pond covered with it will lose but little in the hottest season; and it should therefore be welcomed wherever it will grow, and cherished as a friend.

The hydra is found attached in great quantities to the stems of duckweed. They are, indeed, strange creatures, and are still stranger when examined through a microscope. They may be seen with the naked eye, hanging in all sorts of strange ways with their arms or tentacles stretched out in search of their still more minute prey. They are of nearly all colours, and they possess the marvellous faculty of growing again into perfect creatures after being cut into many pieces. Small as they are, it is stated that Trembley, the celebrated naturalist of Geneva, turned one of these polypes or hydras inside out! These are his words:—

"I begin by giving a worm to the polype on which I wish to make an experiment, and when it is swallowed I begin operations. It is well not to wait until the worm is much digested. I put the polype, whose stomach is well filled, in a little water in the hollow of my left hand. I then press it with a small forceps nearer to the tail end than to the head. In this way I push the swallowed worm against the mouth of the polype, which is thus forced to open, and by again slightly pressing the polype with my forceps, I cause the worm partly to come out from its mouth, and thus draw out with it an equal part of the end of its stomach. The worm coming out of the mouth of the polype, forces it to enlarge itself considerably, especially if it comes out doubled up. When the polype is in this state, I take it gently out of the water, without disturbing anything, and place it on the edge of my hand, which is simply moistened, so that it may not adhere too closely. I oblige it to contract more and more, and this also enlarges the stomach and mouth. The worm then is partly coming out of the mouth; and, keeping it open, I then take in my right hand a hog's bristle, rather thick and without a point, and I hold it as one holds a lancet for bleeding. I bring its thickest end to the hind end of the polype, and push it, making it enter into its stomach, which is the more easily done as in that part it is empty and much enlarged. I push on the end of the hog's bristle, which continues to invest the polype. When it reaches the worm, which holds

the mouth open, it either pushes the worm or passes by its side, and at last comes out by the mouth, the polype being thus completely turned inside out."

And why was such an apparently impossible task undertaken? To see whether the animal with its wrong side outermost would continue to eat, grow, and multiply as before; and this, Trembley assures us, it did.

It is supposed that the arms of the polype have the power of paralyzing, in an instant, the worms they wrap themselves round.

The curious *Athering ibis* fly may now be observed. It is of a brown or tawny colour, and has rather long, diverging, colourless wings, marked with irregular brown spots. It lays its eggs in company with hundreds of its fellows, and having completed its duty, its body falls dead, attached to the ova. The spots selected for deposit are rails, or boughs overhanging the water, and there sometimes many thousand defunct females may be found. The larva in due time falls into the water—perhaps after feeding upon its dead parent—and then undergoes its allotted changes, until at length it emerges into the winged insect, and by the aid of a water weed seeks a short life in the air.

We have been, as a matter of course, to see the horse-chestnuts in flower in Bushey Park; but the weather did not permit of our reflecting, as has been our wont, beneath their pendulous branches, some of which hang from the tops of the trees, and would trail on the ground did not the deer stretch their graceful necks, and crop their tender shoots to one uniform height throughout the whole avenue. There is no vegetable production of British growth more admired or more deserving of admiration, on account of its brilliant appearance at so early a season of the year, than this glorious tree. Its beautiful large and elegant clusters of light red and white flowers, in upright conical spikes, terminate the branches on all sides in such manner that sometimes the whole tree appears one mass of them.

The horse-chestnut was first brought into Europe, from the northern parts of Asia, about the year 1550, and its growth was found to be so rapid in this country that trees raised from nuts in twelve or fourteen years attained nearly their full altitude and dimensions. It is further remarkable in the growth of the horse-chestnut tree that the whole of the spring shoots are said to be completed in little more than three weeks from the first opening of the buds.

The deer are passionately fond of the fruit, and we have known them show fight when driven off the ground upon which the nuts have fallen when ripe. It is likewise of considerable use, more particularly on the Continent, in the feeding of cattle, the fat of which it is said to render peculiarly firm. For this purpose, however, as well as the feeding of sheep, the foreigner considers it advantageous to macerate the nuts in lime water or in caustic alkali, to deprive them of their bitterness, and afterwards to wash them in water, and boil them into a paste. It is singular that although goats are fond of these nuts, they are said to be unwholesome for swine. In Turkey they are ground and mixed with provender for horses, and if they could be wholly divested of their bitterness and acrimony, it is supposed they would form a palatable and nutritious bread.

Table Talk.

WHO of those of our readers who ever saw Strauss, the celebrated composer of dance music, conduct the orchestra at Covent Garden Theatre some few years ago, will ever forget him? It is said—we, however, do not vouch for the truth of it—that he is as nervous a composer as he is a director. Clad in a velvet costume, with patent leather boots reaching to his knees, his eyes aflame, and in a fit of inspiration, he goes striding through his house like a maniac. If inspiration does not come to him in the *salon*, he clutches his papers and goes to his bed-room or his wife's boudoir. Sometimes the waltz begun in the parlour is finished in the kitchen. Frau Strauss, who appreciates and understands her husband's habits, has half a dozen pianos scattered through the house, and in each room a table with writing materials, so that in whatever nook he finds himself, the Herr is quite at home.

CHEMICAL ACTION OF PLANTS.—Professor August Vogel, of Munich, Bavaria, has recently published an interesting paper on the chemical action of plants, in which he shows that the green leaves, aided by the sunlight, not only decompose carbonic acid in the atmosphere, but also bring about the union of oxygen and nitrogen. He refers to the fact that gardeners never water plants in the sunshine, and explains the reason on the principle that in the bright sun nitric acid is formed out of the oxygen and nitrogen, and the plants are thus injured. The plants decompose or generate nitric acid, carbonic acid, ammonia, &c., and are thus incessantly engaged in chemical operations—the roots as well as the leaves co-operating in the work. The plants attack the soil with their roots by means of an acid which is secreted in them, and even silica is dissolved. They are always at work for the benefit of mankind, accomplishing that which man would not be able to do in his present knowledge. They take the alkali of the soil, and store it up for us in a way that we cannot imitate. It seems but fair that we should furnish the requisite compost to enable the plants to do all this work for us.

DUST FROM OTHER WORLDS THAN OURS.—The colour of the sky is said to be due to the transmission of rays of light through a cloud of dust which collects above the earth. Professor Nordenskiöld examined the snow which covered the icebergs as far north as 80°, and found it strewn with a multitude of minute black particles, spread over the surface, or situated at the bottom of little pits, a great number of which were seen on the outward layer of snow. Many of such particles were also lodged in the inferior strata. This dust, which became grey on drying, contained a large proportion of metallic particles attracted by the magnet, and capable of decomposing sulphate of copper. An observation made a little later upon other icebergs proved the presence of similar dust in a layer of granular crystalline snow, situated beneath a stratum of light fresh, another of hardened, snow. Upon analysis, this matter was found to be composed of metallic iron, phosphorus, cobalt, and fragments of diatomaceæ. It bears the greatest analogy to the dust previously collected by the professor on the snows of Greenland, and described by him under the name of "kryokonite."

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER X.—A REVELATION.

THE attempt to shoot Edmund Harcourt naturally created no little excitement in the circle in which he moved. This was intensified when it came to be known that the wound was attended with some danger. The bullet was extracted without affording much relief. Fever followed; there was delirium, and people began to wonder how it would end.

Excitement was fed with mystery.

It was so strange that the young man's life should be attempted in the public street. It was yet more strange, as the medical men called in declared, that he should be getting worse when, according to their theory, he ought to be well on toward recovery.

The first mystery no one could fathom.

As to the second, popular ingenuity invented a clue to it. People said that the bullet had been poisoned, and that, though extracted, the virus rankled in the flesh, and caused all the mischief reported.

The news reached Arlington-square at a critical moment. The effects of the slight accident to Mr. Framlingham were sufficient to confine him to his house for a few days, during which time he occupied a little study, in which he was accustomed to spend his leisure hours. There, lying on a sofa, he read and wrote, and made himself as comfortable as circumstances would permit, receiving at all times the most devoted attention at the hands of Ruby, his most unhappy daughter.

Up to the time of her interview with Arthur Pembrose, Ruby had not taken her father into her confidence. He did not know, or suspect, any change in Edmund Harcourt's views toward her; much less was he prepared for the revelation that actually awaited him. Harcourt had paid his daughter marked attentions; and though he had never asked permission to propose to her, it was understood, as such things often are, that they were engaged. It is not always necessary that an open and explicit declaration should precede an engagement. The etiquette of society on this point is very clear; and when a young man pays a young lady marked attentions—escorts her to places of amusement, is a constant visitor at her father's house, and devotes himself assiduously to gratifying her wants and wishes—that is enough. The Framlingham circle regarded Edmund Harcourt in the light of Ruby's lover as much as if he had asked permission to have the banns put up.

This being so, Ruby's course was clear.

She was compelled to make her father acquainted with what had happened, though she feared the outburst of indignation with which the revelation was certain to be received. It was characteristic of her, and carried out what she had said about not being like other girls, that she delayed this revelation as long as possible, partly because she did not like to give her father pain, partly because the delay gave her time to school herself into an appearance of calmness which hid what she really suffered, and enabled her to mention Harcourt's name almost with indifference.

It was in the gloom of evening—in the interval before lights were brought—that Ruby, seated on an

ottoman near the sofa on which her father lay, and clasping one of his hands, told what had happened.

She began most quietly:

"Mr. Harcourt will not visit us any more, papa," she said, abruptly, in a firm but subdued tone.

"Not visit us any more?" was the natural rejoinder.

"No. At least, I suppose not."

"But why? What has happened?"

"He has proposed to Eva Knowles."

In spite of his sprain, Framlingham brought his feet suddenly to the ground, and clutching his daughter's hand, looked hard into her face. His own was distorted with anger.

"The scoundrel!" he ejaculated. "Proposed to Eva, after all that has happened—after all his attentions! Surely impossible!"

"It is quite true."

"But, my child, my darling, when did you learn this?"

"On the night of our dinner party."

"That night? It was this news, then, which overcame you! Some one blurted out the truth incautiously! Was it so?"

"Yes."

"But who—who? They might have been mistaken. From whose lips did you get the information?"

"From his own."

"You overheard his declaration?"

"I did."

"You should have come to me at once. You should have given me the opportunity of being revenged here under my own roof. The villain! I would have set a brand on his devil's face that he should have carried to the grave with him. Aye, and I will do it now. 'Tis not too late. Let him dare to cross my path, and he shall find that, though I cannot make him give me the satisfaction of a gentleman in this accursed country, there are ways by which a man may vindicate his honour and that of his child! But, my poor Ruby, if I am moved, what—what must your feelings be?"

She answered him quite calmly.

"I am glad, very glad," she said.

He stared at her in amazement.

"Glad?" he asked.

"Yes, glad to be saved from the attentions of one who had no other motive in professing attachment to me than to throw you off your guard, so that he might quietly effect your ruin."

The look of amazement intensified.

"How do you arrive at all this?" he demanded. "I can understand that Harcourt might have sought you for the fortune I may be able to give you, and that he is alarmed at the enormous losses we have sustained of late. But beyond this—"

"Beyond this," she interrupted, "there is a depth of villainy yet to be fathomed! What if, in some mysterious way, Edmund Harcourt were the cause of these losses?"

"Impossible!"

"You think so? Do you know his history? He has told us that he comes of a good family, impoverished from political and other causes. You have seen his parchments, and heard his explanations of the property that will revert to him at the death of those who now hold it. The glib lies are familiar to us both; but for all their glibness, they are lies. I know that, and

knowing it, am glad—glad to be rid of him. But now you shall hear his real history."

She rose, went to the window, opened it, and looked out.

There was a pause as she closed down the sash and resumed her seat. Then, within a second or two, a servant brought in lights and announced a visitor:

"Mr. Arthur Pembrose."

The name was received with a shrug of dissatisfaction.

"Why does he come at this moment of all others?" Framlingham asked impatiently.

"Because he can tell you all you wish to know," was Ruby's reply; "he comes at my request."

Before more could be said he was in the room. He entered, pale, and with a scared, agitated expression of face. Instinctively Ruby shrank from him, as from one bringing ill news; but she remembered what there was between them, and the trepidation seemed naturally accounted for.

"You bring news," said Framlingham, after the first greetings; "so my daughter tells me."

"Yes," replied the younger man; "and I think you will agree with me that it is news of moment. Our losses in the business—"

The other testily interrupted.

"No matter for that," he said. "I am too agitated to attend to losses or gains. You know something of Edward Harcourt. What is it?"

"I was about to say," was the quiet answer.

"Indeed! It is you, then, who has put the notion into my child's head that he is at the bottom of our misfortunes?"

"I believe so; but you shall judge. Accident has thrown in my way a page from the criminal history of our country. Nearly five years ago, the Foreign Office granted a warrant for the apprehension of a British consul on the coast of Turkey. He had absconded, and not without reason; for his offence was one of the most serious description. He had entered into a conspiracy, it was alleged, to defraud the underwriters at Lloyd's of £10,000, the amount of an insurance effected by him on a ship named the *Khedive*, laden with precious woods and other commodities; which ship, as he falsely alleged, was lost off the Island of Lemnos. I see that you begin to see the drift of what I have to communicate."

Framlingham Brothers, as he was called, assented, and would have spoken; but the young man interrupted him.

"Let me first conclude what I have to say. Suspicion was excited by the pressing demands made by him on the underwriters to get this matter settled, and the money paid. A special agent was sent out; and he made this startling discovery. The consul—need I remind you that he was appointed in the name of Hilton Gathorne?—had declared that he had been engaged to effect the insurance of the *Khedive* by a Turkish friend of his. In proof of this, he produced a certificate from the harbour-master of the port to which the ship was said to belong, certifying the departure of the vessel. A second document was also sent home, purporting to be a certificate of the consular agent at the port, confirming its departure. A third document was Hilton Gathorne's own certificate as to the cargo on board the vessel. A fourth, and a most material one, professed

to be a statement made to an agent at Samos, by a Captain Blencowe, to the effect that he had passed the *Khedive*, or a vessel answering her description, while she was on fire at sea. All these documents are now in the possession of the Foreign Office. And it was upon the face of them that the office nearly five years ago issued the warrant of which I have spoken. Is it necessary to say why? Is it necessary to tell you, as a man familiar with what is passing around you in the world, that a chain of evidence revealed to the authorities of Lloyd's that the whole thing was a mere audacious invention? There never was a ship called the *Khedive*. No such person as Gathorne's Turkish friend had ever requested him to effect the insurance described, for the sufficient reason that no such person ever existed. There was neither ship, agent, nor cargo; and the Captain Blencowe, who was alleged to have made a statement to the agent at Samos as to the destruction of the *Khedive* by fire, was a myth. The whole was a fraud to secure the amount of the insurance for Hilton Gathorne's own use. You know this; you know that on its being substantiated a warrant was issued for his apprehension, and he fled. He has never been heard of to this day."

With these words the young man ceased speaking.

There was a dead pause.

"You have something to add?" Framlingham presently asked, impatient at having to ask it.

"Yes," was the answer, "if anything further is necessary."

"Well, as to that, I see, or think I see, the purport of what you have narrated. Most of our losses of late years have been in the underwriting part of our business. We have insured ships, and they have gone to the bottom."

"Exactly."

"The *Hannah*, for example, on which loss twenty thousand pounds—"

"Goes down, and the news of that event reaches town on the day that Mr. Harcourt proposes for the hand of Eva Knowles."

"True; that was a coincidence. And I am to understand your theory to be that Edmund Harcourt is Hilton Gathorne, who has ventured back to England, and is quietly making money in the way in which he has already once got into trouble? That is so? Then pardon me if I say that the idea is monstrous, and one that will not bear thinking over; and that, much as I have cause to detest him, I cannot believe anything so incredible."

The face of Arthur Pembrose flushed as that of an innocent man will flush at the slightest imputation of disingenuousness. He said nothing, but inclined his head, and in doing so set his teeth firmly into his nether lip.

"No, no," the elder man repeated, as he thought over what he had just listened to; "your imagination has played tricks with you. I cannot credit this."

Men of business are singularly mistrustful of the imagination. They cannot understand that its operations are in the nature of a higher kind of logic.

Arthur Pembrose knew this, and did not press his point. Indeed, he offered a sort of apology for having gone so far.

"You do not ask me if I have proof of the identity of these men," he said. "You see that if I had I

should have told the story differently. You are right; yet there is a chain of evidence sufficient to satisfy my own mind on the subject, and that will, no doubt, be strengthened. Some day I shall probably have facts to offer you. Fortunately there is no hurry. Harcourt cannot run away."

"No?"

"He has received a pistol wound which has disabled him, and will probably confine him to his bed for weeks, if not months."

Ruby, who had been a patient listener to all that had passed—sitting with her eyes fixed intently on the fire—suddenly looked up, with an eager, inquiring face.

"He has been shot?" she asked, in tremulous voice.

"Yes."

"By whom?"

"That is a mystery."

"But is no one suspected? How did it occur?"

As briefly as possible he told the story, so far as it was known. Edmund Harcourt, walking in the streets, had been fired at from a distance, and the ball had entered his arm. Popular report, he added, alleged that the ball was poisoned.

Mr. Framlingham passed his hands through his long silvery hair, and smiled. The smile said, as plainly as words could have done, that his managing man was again letting his imagination get the better of his judgment. He was, however, compelled to admit that the circumstance was a very strange one.

"In what part of town," he asked, "did it occur?"

"Down by the river-side," was the answer. "In a low part of Wapping."

"Strange!" cried the underwriter. "What should he be doing there?"

Arthur Pembrose shrugged his shoulders, but was not at all disposed to go into particulars. The reception he met with did not incline him to be communicative, and he held his peace as to what he knew and suspected of the old house by the river-side. Perhaps he was the less inclined to pursue the subject from observing the painful effect his communication had produced on Ruby. Her agitation was extreme. The colour had left her face, and there was a painful twitching of the mouth, as she sat clasping and unclasping her hands, unconsciously seeking relief in action.

To Arthur, loving her as he did, all this was a source of exquisite torture. He read her secret. He knew that she in vain affected indifference for the man who treated her with a shameful cruelty. She loved him still. She loved him so well that the mere thought of danger to him agitated her beyond all power of control. The perception of this filled the heart of the observer with the bitterest pangs of jealousy, and he was little disposed to prolong an interview which had taken a turn so distressing.

It was Ruby herself who forced from him one other admission.

"You say that—that Mr. Harcourt is ill?" she asked.

"Is there danger?"

"There may be. He is delirious."

"He is receiving all proper attentions?"

"Yes; I myself watch by his bedside to-night."

"You!"

She rose from her seat and fixed on him a wild,

troubled look. He met her gaze, and a strange hysteric smile played about his lips.

"His friend and my friend, Randolph Agnew, has requested me to do him this favour," he said.

She heard with a look of dismay, and would have spoken, but strong emotion checked the words on her lips. Her father saw her emotion, and bade Arthur a hasty good night. Ruby inclined her head, but did not offer her hand.

Dwelling with bitterness on this cool parting, the young man quitted the house.

"'Tis ever so," he muttered, as he dashed into the street; "the woman who loves once loves always, and she believed she hated him! 'We will hunt him to the death,' she said. God forgive her!"

Heaven might, but he could not. Yet he loved her with every fibre of his being!

The Man in the Open Air.

THERE may have been very many thousands of persons who, attracted by the floral banquet in Bushey Park, so liberally and gratuitously furnished by the grand avenue, three and four deep of horse chest-nuts, were careless to inquire whence the name of Bushey. This title is derivable from a vegetable origin, as it arises from the great number of thorn trees, which are now deserving perhaps as much attention as their tall and majestic rivals in the grand avenue. True, they are not marshalled all in a row, like soldiers standing at ease, but are scattered here and there, more after the fashion of skirmishers harassing an enemy; and sharpshooters indeed they can prove, if a luckless youth, while playing blindman's-buff in that "holiday domain," should clasp a branch of this family in his arms.

These trees are generally supposed to have been in existence at the time of Oliver Cromwell—the park being then used as a hare preserve. As these thorns increase in age, they have the property of separating themselves into different stems, some having four or five, or even six, which as they separate become regularly barked round, forming in appearance so many distinct trees closely planted together, except that they all meet at the butt of the tree.

A rude woodcut of a cluster of these thorns may be seen in "Jesse's Gleanings of Natural History," but our advice is to go and examine these curious old bushes yourselves. There may be seen some of them undergoing the process of separation, having already thrown out one stem, while in other parts they are deeply indented with seams down the whole tree. These, gradually deepening from opposite sides towards the centre, will at last split the tree into a number of distinct stems, which are soon completely covered with bark.

In other trees the seam is hardly visible, though none of them are without it. This peculiarity seems confined to the thorn, and as it does not exhibit itself in those but recently self-sown, it is probably the effect of great age. Jesse truly says he "knows of few sights more beautiful than the fine old thorns of Bushey Park in full blossom."

Yes, and after tiring of the park and the palace, if you can in a day get satiated with the numberless beau-

ties in these precincts, is there not the river close at hand—"majestic Thames"? Rivers have in all ages been themes for the poets; and in what esteem they were held by ancient writers may be inferred from the authors who wrote of them previous to Plutarch.

Who is not charmed with Spenser's "Marriage of the Thames and the Medway;" and what personifications in Ovid or Hesiod are more beautiful than the "Sabrina" of Milton, and the "Ladona" of Pope? Not to say anything of other lands, the Severn, the Ouse, and the Trent, the Avon, the Derwent, and the Dee, have been distinguished by the praises of many an excellent and accomplished poet.

On the borders of the Cam, Milton enjoyed the happiest moments of his life. The Severn by many is considered more noble than the Thames; but "comparisons are odious." Each British river has its peculiar charms—the Dee its fine sweeps, particularly in the Vale of Llandisilio; and the Derwent those near Matlock. The Towy, the Usk, and the Wye have their graceful meanderings at every turn; and any one of them may fairly challenge the far-famed rivers of Europe to present objects more various, landscapes more rich, or scenes more graceful and magnificent.

Look at our lakes again—lakes equal in beauty and sublimity to those of Larno, Lucerne, and Pergusa. Yet how many of us are now getting ready to run away from our own country, and spend our money like water, who have not seen the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, or those of Loch Lomond, Loch Leven, Bala, Killarney, and a hundred others nestling in the mountains of Scotland and Ireland.

Then let us glance, before our departure to foreign scenes, at our waterfalls and cataracts. With what ecstasy have we beheld that beautiful waterfall gliding over a slate rock, in two graceful leaps, at the extremity of a long winding and romantic glen, near Aber in Carnarvonshire. But what is this to those of the Falls of Hepsey, of Conway, the Cynfael, and the grand Black Cataract, near the vale of Ffestiniog—the latter "bold, rugged, craggy, and gigantic." But if you would sup full of the horrors of sublimity, visit Nant Mill, on the borders of Lake Cwellyn. Then our woods, and groves, and forests! But we say all this with an object. Let our small voice receive an echo in the breasts of our readers, with the effects of inducing them first to look at home before we venture to indulge in comparisons with other countries. Or, if our appeal is not heeded, listen to the verdict of Serjeant Talfourd, in his delightful volume of "Vacation Rambles." There, after telling us of his travels throughout the greater part of Europe, he confesses in effect that the ten miles ride from Dole to Barmouth encompasses almost as many impressive beauties and objects of picturesque grandeur as all he had witnessed beyond our happy sea-girt isle.

We were negligently reposing the other day on a truss of hay in an old barn, near Eltham, watching the pranks of a dame rat with her litter of five babies, which, wholly unconscious of our presence, gambolled and frisked about, to their own obvious delight and the unbounded joy of their fond parent. Curious to see what would be the result of peering over our hiding-place, we gradually raised ourselves, staring all the time "with all our eyes" fixedly on the interesting group. The mother was the first to see us; upon

which she uttered a low but distinct squeal, immediately stopping the antics of her little family, which looked all around for the cause of this note of alarm. Still the youngsters did not see us; but Madame Mus had got her gaze fully upon us, evidently in doubt, as we did not move, whether we were equal to her suspicions. We suspect she saw us close and open our eyes—an involuntary act—for she immediately rushed backwards and forwards behind her progeny, and thrusting one with her nose, and biting another, she drove them before her, as a collie dog would a flock of sheep, until they entered a hole in the woodwork, which led into a dairy-yard. As soon as they had disappeared, we jumped up and went round to the yard, and distinctly saw the old lady pick up one of her offspring in her mouth, and scamper off with it towards a wheat rick. We again hid ourselves, as the remainder of the family were all astray, and we wished to see what her ladyship would do. We had not long to wait; for after a careful survey of all around, she came back from time to time, and fetched the whole of her brood, and placed them, doubtless, in a place of safety.

Cats will carry their young from place to place, and we have known a cat to bring from a dust-heap her apparently dead offspring, which had been immersed for a lengthened period in a pail of water, and revive by her warmth the whole of her kittens.

Several fruitless attempts having been made to introduce the golden or lake bream into the Thames, in which the white description—a worthless fish—is to be found only as high as Chertsey, the committee of the Maidenhead, Cookham, and Bray Angling Association consulted with Mr. Greville Fennell, the well-known pisciculturist, who at once accepted the undertaking, Harry Wilder, the popular fisherman, of Maidenhead, being placed at his service as an assistant. The Ouse at Bedford was chosen as the locality from whence to draw the supply, and arrangements having been made with the London and North-Western and Great Western Railways to expedite the carriage of the tanks of live fish, operations by netting were commenced on Wednesday last; and on Saturday the first instalment arrived at Maidenhead Bridge, where it was met by several gentlemen and ladies interested in the experiment, and carried to a spot a little above Boulter's Lock, nearly opposite Cliveden (the Marquis of Westminster's), where the whole of the fish were turned in to their new quarters in the fullest health and vigour. These fish are a generous offering to the Thames from the members of the Bedford Anglers' Club, who have refused to take any recompense for their services or for the fish; but it has since been ascertained that the Ouse is as innocent of barbel as the Thames was of the golden bream. A return in this kind will take place as soon as possible after the opening of the general angling season (the 1st of June), such fish to be taken, not with the net, but with the rod and line. It should be understood that the golden or lake bream is the fish alluded to by Chaucer, and spoken of by other ancient writers, as a most luxurious and sapid table dainty. Not so the white bream, which is as despicable as edible food well can be.

The butterfly is now hovering over our currant and gooseberry trees, and these bushes should be occasionally well searched for the eggs of this destructive

creature, ere the caterpillar renders the whole tree bare of leaves, and thus removes the protection of shade from the fruit, so necessary for its proper development and perfection. There are many nostrums recommended for the destruction of these pests, but in ordinary-sized gardens nothing equals hand picking.

Queer Cards.

CHAPTER V.—AWAY TO SEA.

BUT soon a great trouble overtook me, just as I'd made myself a sort of place in the village; not that it had been altogether unexpected, but still we always look at these things a long way off, and they come up to us instead of our going up to them.

"Mother died. She knew of it the day before, and called me up to her bedside in the evening to talk to her. I read a little to her, and promised that I'd follow her desires in everything she asked me; but she said I'd been saved from evil once, and knew what it was to have suffered for it; so she gave me her little Bible, and told me if ever I had the opportunity of warning and helping father, not to forget him, but to keep away from the places where we had used to meet, unless I felt that I could go there without harm. Then she took hold of my hand, and we said a prayer together, and she fell asleep.

"I sat there till morning, and the hand that was in mine got cold, and then I went out into the woods, and lay down all day under the trees.

"I stopped in the village two years after mother was laid in the little churchyard there, and then my poor old master, Pegrew, died, and I was left alone.

"The whole two villages followed the old man to his grave, and well they might, for he'd been a friend to most of 'em; but a doctor had come and set up in the High-street, close to the Red Lion, and so perhaps they soon got to think lightly of good wholesome herb physic. He'd left me all his books and receipts, as well as some of his furniture, and it was thought that I should get the berth after him; but it wasn't to happen so.

"It was only about a week afterwards that I was sitting in the cottage, reading some of the old man's papers, and thinking that I should have a hard matter to bear myself day after day. I'd never thought of marrying, somehow, for it seems perhaps a strange thing to say, and may have been a sort of madness, but Miss Rose always used to stand between me and such thoughts; as though I hadn't a right to forget her now, when I'd begun to understand what she wanted me to do for her sake. It was likely she was dead, but she never would seem dead to me, I fancied, and my thoughts about her were too many to leave room for any other woman—there, I can't exactly make it out to you, but so it was.

"Well, I was sitting there, thinking that I couldn't keep on year after year in the village, and feeling a sort of restlessness coming over me, as though I'd like to go a thousand mile away, and find my young mistress, if so be she was in the world, when I saw a man's face looking through the little leaden casement at me.

"He was worn out and ill, but the same sort of sneerin' look about his face was there yet. I knew him in a minute. It was father. It was no use to pretend not to see him, so I opened the door and let him in.

"I soon learnt what he'd come for; he'd just got out

of prison, and had heard that mother was dead, and that I was 'a great man,' as he said.

"He'd come for money. He'd kept me long enough before I sneaked off and left him, and now he wanted me to pay him back again.

"I tried to talk to him, and get him to alter his way of life; but he swore at me, and told me to keep my cant for the parson.

"I couldn't keep him; but I thought of mother's last words, and offered to allow him half I earned till he got some honest calling.

"If it had been two hundred a year, he said, he'd have taken it; but, as it was, he wanted money now, and money he'd have. If I didn't give him something handsome, he'd stick up who I was on the church doors but what he'd ruin me.

"I'd saved a matter of twenty pound one way or another, and I gave him five of it.

"That would do for a time, he said; he'd come back for more when he wanted it.

"I packed up my books and clothes the same night, sewed my money up in my waistband, and next day, after leaving a letter for the churchwarden and the curate, took the coach to London. I'd made up my mind to go to sea, if I could find a ship for Jamaiky.

"I'd determined to steer clear of all the old haunts, and to get on board some ship as soon as ever I reached town; so that I only stopped to eat a loaf of bread and drink a little beer before I started off towards the water-side; for though it was getting late in the evening, I thought I might, by inquiring, find some of the captains, and then get them to take me.

"I'd hardly turned down some of the dirty streets, however, before I heard a shout behind me, and two or three men running. I stood on one side to let 'em pass, but it was no use; it was me that they were after, and before I could run far I was caught in a regular net of blind alleys.

"I showed fight at first, but that was no use, though I gave one or two of 'em a clip with my stick. That was one of the things I'd learnt of old Pegrew, for he was a first-rate hand at singlestick; and many's the bout we'd had on the church green on a summer's evening. However, one of these fellows draws out a pistol, and hollers to the others to come off.

"Now, my man,' he says, 'we want hands to serve his Majesty on board the *Basilisk*.'

"I'll go,' says I, 'if you're bound for Jamaiky.'

"I might as well go in his Majesty's service as any other way, I thought, especially as there was no help for it, and there were three to one; and so I shouldered my knapsack again, and we all went away in company. I was glad of it, for we had to get down to Portsmouth at once to join the ship, and the officer in charge of the men in London let me go down with him by the coach, for he'd had an ugly knock on the shoulder a day or two before, and I bound it up for him with a herb poultice that gave him ease in the course of an hour or two; so I asked whether I might go with him, and that way get clear of all the pitching about in the tender that took the rest of the fellows that had been picked up in London.

"It was one while before I got used to the sea, I can tell you; but once I found my feet, I was rated a good man as any aboard, for I was as active as a sheep at that time, and took a pride in learning all I could about

the vessel and my duty. It was a good job I did, for we had a dreary time of it, cruising about on and off the West India group, but never so much as coming within hail of a port all the time. Once we sent out boats to St. Jago, but never a word about Jamaiky.

"Well, I'm spinning a yarn that would have lasted a whole watch on board the *Basilisk*. We were on the look-out for a suspicious-looking craft that had been lurking about there; and, to make a long story short, I'll leave out all about where we went to.

"It was on and off all sorts of stations, sometimes ashore for a week, sometimes away from land, laying under a sun hot enough to burn the tail off a brass monkey, and with never a breeze to move us out of the dull, heavy wash of the sea, as it heaved like melted lead. Then we'd be, with pretty near bare poles and lashings all fast, in the middle of one of them awful tornadoes, as if all the universe was being jumbled together, and the end of all things was come.

"It was four years, as sure as I'm a living sinner, before we stood one day for Kingston Harbour, and we saw the boats coming off with the niggers bringing up fresh fowls for the captain's dinner. In one of them boats there came a gentleman and a little girl, and hailed the *Basilisk*, to say they were coming on board.

"We soon rigged a chair to fetch up the young lady, and the gentleman came in after her.

"He was an old friend of the captain's, it seemed, and wanted to speak to him; but as soon as the little girl had got aboard, she was away up the poop ladder, while the father looked after her, and called her, afraid of her getting into danger.

"I was just righting the tackle of the chair at the moment, and the captain beckoned me.

"Just go and take care of that little lady, my lad," he says, "and ask Mr. Benson" (that was our first lieutenant) "to bring her down to me presently."

"Away I went, just as the pretty little thing was looking out over the water, with her great broad hat pulled down to shade her eyes.

"Would you like to look through the glass, miss?" says I.

"She turned round to look at me, and I thought I should have gone a header into the water, for it was Miss Rose over again, only a little child.

"My name's Rose," she says; "what's your name?"

"And she came and stood hanging on my arm, while I held the glass for her to look through.

"I couldn't learn any more, except that her mamma's name was Madame Pierrot, and that they lived away from Kingston, up the island; but she chattered all about the ship, and asked me no end of questions that I had much ado to answer. For all that, when the first lieutenant came to take her away, I'd rather have lost a week's grog than parted with her.

"When I took off my hat to her, she made me one of the prettiest little curtseys in the world, and she says—

"If you ever come up to our house with Captain Styles, I'll ask mamma to give you some of my nice sweets, that old Chloe makes for me."

"But I didn't go there that voyage, except for a minute or two. The captain went ashore the next day, and I went in the gig with him. Then four of us went away to Madame Pierrot's home, to carry a box that Captain Styles had brought from England.

"The place was a good way from Kingston, and the road led right through one of the most beautiful places I ever saw in my life. It brought to my mind all fresh the stories Miss Rose used to tell me about Jamaiky; and here it was, a regular garden full of lovely plants, half of 'em new to me. Vines and cocoa-nut trees, and coffee bushes, and pimento, and tamarinds, and plantains; and then flowers of all sorts of bright colours.

"We were all of us roughish enough, perhaps, being seamen; but I can tell you we never felt the weight of the box, and only grunted out a word now and then, we had so much to look at.

"But I had more to look at presently, as we came up to the house. It was a square-built sort of a place, on a rising ground above the plantation, and looked right over the niggers' quarters, and all the sheds and outhouses; a part of the house stood on a sort of piles made of cocoa-nut trees, and a pretty sort of a balcony, shaded with a green awning, went in front of the windows.

"We no sooner got to the door than I heard a voice in the balcony that made me start as if I was shot, and my mate, Jack Reeve, told me afterwards that I looked as though I meant to pitch the box up through the railings. When I looked up, I saw Mr. Feene, standing leaning over the back of a chair, and talking to the gentleman that had come on board the *Basilisk* the day before; and there, swinging the little girl in a grass hammock, was a tall, beautiful lady, with a baby on her arm.

"I knew her in a moment, and felt my legs giving way under me: it was Miss Rose, and she was alive.

"Oh! mamma, here's the sailor that I promised my sweets to," said the little lady, as she jumped up.

"And then the lady gave the baby to a nigger girl, and came out to her husband to welcome Captain Styles.

"The little lady was sent down with a big nigger that she called Bo-peep, to give us all a suck of cold grog, with a squeeze of lime; and she brought me a paper full of sweetmeats, that I put in my pocket; but we were ordered down to the boat directly afterwards, and I hadn't a chance of speaking to my dear mistress."

THE PRINCE'S PRESENTS.—The menagerie brought from India by the Prince of Wales consists of two huge tigers, one small tiger, three leopards, two bears, one scaly "manaz;" two "boussa," or wild hill dogs; two "custoree," or musk deer; one "chowsinghee," or four-horned deer; one "sambar" deer, two hog deer, and one sheep with a single horn; one male and three female "tahar," or wild goats of the Himalayas. There is a magnificent Thibetan dog, presented to his Royal Highness by Sir Henry Ramsay, the Commissioner of Kumaon; a fine Butheah dog, presented by Sir Jung Bahadoor; and a pair of very diminutive Thibetan dogs, the exuberant spirits of which did not permit a closer inspection. Besides these, there was a magnificent and very valuable collection of all the varieties of hill pheasants, about 100 birds and partridges, amongst which we noticed some beautiful pairs of the argus, the manal or impuyan, the cheer, the college, as also some jungle fowl; some pairs of the black, the pura, and the chakora partridge. There were also some cooing doves, beautiful pigeons, and other birds, which were at once as novel as they were interesting to look at.



DAYBREAK IN AN AFRICAN FOREST.

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER XLV.

THAT evening Frank Pratt was busily preparing himself for a City dinner, when Richard rushed panting into the room, haggard, his face covered with perspiration, and a look of despair in his eyes that frightened his friend.

"Why, Dick, old man," he cried, catching his hands, "what is it?"

"Money, Frank—give me money—ten—twenty—fifty pounds; doctors—doctors. I've killed her—killed her!" he groaned.

Pratt asked no questions, but unlocking a desk, he took out and placed five crisp bank notes in his friend's hand.

"I knew you would," panted Richard. "God bless you, Frank! Best doctor—consumption?"

"Morley, Cavendish-square," said Pratt, with sharp brevity.

Then waving his hand, Richard dashed from the room; while Pratt quietly sat down, half-dressed, to think it out, which meant to light his pipe.

Meanwhile his friend had rushed down, taken Sam Jenkles's cab, which was waiting, and, as he was being driven through the streets, went over the incidents of his return—how they had called on a suburban surgeon, who had administered a styptic, and ordered them to go back very gently—how Mrs. Lane had met him with a look of reproachful agony in her eyes, as he lifted out the half insensible girl, and bore her upstairs; and then, as he turned to go, after laying poor Netta on the bed, she had held out her hands to him, taking his in hers, and kissing them—so unmanly him that he had sunk upon his knees by her side, and hid his face.

He could hardly recall the rest—only that he had had to go to four doctors before he could find one ready to come to the shabby street; and when at last he had been brought to the poor girl's bedside, he had recommended the hospital.

It was this that had sent the young man to Frank Pratt's for money, the value of which he now thoroughly realized for the first time in his life.

The old white-haired physician came with him at once—Ratty, the horse, never once causing trouble; and Netta gave the messenger a grateful smile, as she saw the mission upon which he had been. Then, with his mind in a whirl, Richard waited to see the physician, taking him over into his own rooms, that his questions might be unheard.

"But she will recover?" said Richard, eagerly.

The old physician shook his head.

"It is but a matter of time," he said, gravely. "I can do nothing. Quiet, change, nutritious food, are the best doctors for a case like hers. A southern climate might benefit her a little; but it would be cruelly to send her away from home, and might do more harm than good. The poor girl is in a deep decline."

Richard was alone. What an end to the pleasant day he had projected!—one which should do his poor little neighbour good, and wherein at the same time he could quietly tell her of his position, and so stop at once any nascent idea she might have that he was

seeking to win her love. How could he know, he asked himself, that matters had gone so far—that the poor child really cared for him—for him, who had not a disloyal thought to Valentina Rea; who, like the poor sufferer, lay that night wakeful, and with a weary, gnawing pain at her heart—in the one case mingled of hopeless misery, in the other tinged with bitterness, and a feeling new to her—anger against the author of her pain.

Thus the days glided by, with Netta lying dangerously ill, too weak to be moved. Richard was over a dozen times a day, asking after her health, and he had insisted upon Mrs. Lane taking money for the necessities of the case. Then came a day when a fly stopped at the door; and Richard from his window, expecting to see a fresh doctor, saw a quiet-looking man step out, enter, stay a quarter of an hour, and then return; and when, an hour later, he went over himself, it was to find Mrs. Lane deeply agitated, and with traces of tears upon her face; but she made no confidant of him.

At last, while he was sitting writing one day, there came a letter for him, with Frank Pratt for bearer. It had come to his chambers by post, he said, enclosed in another, asking him to forward it.

Frank went away as soon as he had delivered it, seeming troubled; and on Richard opening the note, he found these words:—

"I think it right to tell you what you have done, though no one knows that I have written. I did trust you, Richard Trevor; for I thought you a true, good man, who would be as faithful to my dear sister as she would have been to you. If any one had told me you would give her up directly for somebody else, I could have struck him. But I'll tell you what you've done, for you ought to know it for your punishment: you've broken the heart of the dearest, sweetest sister that ever lived, and I hate you with all mine.

"FIN REA.

"P.S.—Tiny's very ill, almost seriously, and all through you."

He had hardly read the note a second time, when Mrs. Fiddison came in dolefully, to say that Mrs. Jenkles wanted to speak to him; and upon that lady being admitted, it was to say, with a curtesy—

"If you please, sir, Mrs. Lane says Miss Netta has been begging for you to be sent for, if you'd come."

Richard rose to follow the messenger, who said, softly—

"You must be very quiet, sir, for she's greatly changed."

CHAPTER XLVI.—IN THE SQUARE CALLED RUSSELL.

THERE'S plenty of room in Russell-square for a walk, without the promenaders being seen by those without, either in the houses or on the *pavé*.

Russell-square had grown very attractive to Frank Pratt of late, and he used to smoke cigars there at all sorts of hours. He had been seen by the milk there at 6.15, railway time; Z 17 had glanced suspiciously at him at one a.m.; while the crossing-sweeper said she "knewed that there little stoopy gent by heart."

It was one afternoon about three, though, that Pratt was sauntering along one side of the square, when he saw Vanleigh and Sir Felix go slowly up to Sir Hampton's house; and a pang shot through the little fellow,

as envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness took possession of his heart.

"Lucky beggar!" he groaned.

He felt better, though, the next minute, for the servant who answered the door had evidently said "Not at home!" card cases had been withdrawn, and then the visitors had languidly descended the steps and continued their way.

"Lucky beggars!" said Pratt again. "Heigho! what a donkey I am to wander about here. Poor Dick, though, it's to do him a good turn."

He crossed the road to the railings of the garden, and as he walked there he cast a very languishing look up at the great, grim house, almost fancying he heard "Er-rum!" proceed from an open window; and if he had not said his presence there was on account of his friend, any looker-on would have vowed it was upon his own account.

He walked slowly on, thinking about Cornwall, and another visit he had projected there; of Fin Rea, about Richard and his disappointments, about his pretty neighbour, and lastly of a case he had in hand, when a little toy dog rushed amongst the shrubs inside the railings, and began snapping and barking at him, with all the virulence of an old acquaintance.

"Get out, you little wretch!" thought Pratt, and then he fancied he recognized the dog.

"Why, it's Pepine!" he eventually exclaimed.

And if any doubt remained it was solved by a voice crying—

"Naughty Pepine, come here directly!"

And through the trees he caught a glimpse of a lavender dress gracefully draping an iron seat.

It was not the dog that made Frank Pratt flee with rapid strides, till a thought made him check his steps.

"Suppose some one else was walking there!"

In the hope that it might be possible, Pratt went slowly on, taking advantage of every break in the trees to peer anxiously through the railings, seeing, however, nothing but nursemaids in charge of naughty children, whom it was necessary to correct by screwing their arms at the sockets—a beneficial practice, no doubt, but whose good was not apparent at the time. There was a perambulator being propelled by a nursemaid reading the *Family Herald*, while the two children it contained were fast asleep—one hanging forward, sustained by a strap, and looking like a fat Punch in a state of congestion; the other leaning over the side, and having a red place ground in its ear by the perambulator wheel. Farther on there were more children, playing alone at throwing dust, their protectress being engaged in a flirtation with a butcher in blue with a round, bullet head, whose well-oiled hair shone in the afternoon sun.

Pratt walked on, getting hopeless as he progressed, for soon he would come within range of Pepine, and perhaps be discovered when— What was that?

A sharp, short little cough that could be no other than Fin's; and there, through the trees, were she and her sister Tiny, resting on Fin's arm, and walking very slowly.

There was an opening in the shrubs farther on; and hurrying to this, though it was dangerously near Pepine and Aunt Matty, Pratt waited the coming of the sisters.

Alas, for human hopes!—they had turned back, and he had to hurry after them for some distance before he

could find an opening sufficiently clear to display his figure, when he hazarded a cough; and on Fin looking sharply round, he followed it up with a "How d'ye do, Miss Rea?"

"It's Mr. Pratt!" he heard Fin whisper.

And then came back a quiet response.

"Do you always walk like this—within prison bars?" said Pratt, walking on parallel with them.

"It can't be prison when one holds the keys, Mr. Pratt," said Fin, sharply.

"You'll let me shake hands?" he said, after a pause.

"I never see you now."

"How can you?" said Fin, sharply, "when you never call."

"What was the use of my calling, when your servant could only speak me one speech?" said Pratt.

"And pray, what was that?" said Fin, with her nose in the air.

"Not at home."

Fin gave her foot a little stamp on the gravel, and whispered to her sister. By this time they had reached the gate, just as a nursemaid unlocked it, to pass through with her charge.

"Thanks," said Pratt, quietly. And, walking in, he was the next moment with Fin and her sister; the former looking defiant, and half drawing back her hand, the latter so pale and ill that, forgetting Fin, Pratt took both her hands affectionately, as, with a husky voice, he exclaimed—

"My dear Miss Rea, I didn't know you had been so ill."

Tiny answered with a gentle smile; and Fin, who had been setting up all the thorns about her, ready to tear and lacerate this intruder, now looked quite humid of eye, and shook hands quite warmly.

"I—I didn't know you'd be so glad to see me," said Pratt, flushing with pleasure.

"I didn't say I was," said Fin, archly.

"You looked so," it was on Pratt's lips to say; but he checked it, and they strolled on—away from Aunt Matty, after Fin had mischievously proposed that Pratt should go and see her—till Tiny complained of fatigue, and sat down.

Here was an opportunity not to be lost; and, after a little solicitation, Fin consented to leave her sister and walk on, conditionally that they kept in sight.

Pratt, on the strength of his prosperity, had determined to sound his little companion; but before they had gone a dozen yards, he found that his own affairs were to be of no account.

"What's become of that wretch of a friend of yours?" said Fin, sharply.

"Do you mean Sir Felix Landells?" said Pratt, borrowing a shaft from her own quiver.

"No, I don't," said Fin, flushing scarlet, "nor any such silly donkey. I mean—"

Pratt would have gone down on his knees in the gravel, only there was a nursemaid close by, and a big, fat child was sucking its thumb, and staring at them; but he burst out, in a husky voice—

"Oh, Miss Rea—Finetta—pray, pray say that again."

"Indeed, I shall do no such thing," said Fin, sharply, and becoming more red—"why should I?"

"Because it makes me so happy," said Pratt. "I thought it was to be he."

"Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself," said

Fin. "A nice feeling of respect you must have for me, to couple me with that scented dandy."

"Finetta, don't be hard upon me," gasped Pratt—"I can't talk now. If I had you in a witness box I could go ahead, but I feel now as if I were going to lose my case."

"What stuff are you talking?" said Fin, whose little breast was panting.

"I was trying to tell you that I loved you with my whole heart," said Pratt, earnestly; "even as I learned to love you down in Cornwall, when I was such a poor, miserable beggar that I wouldn't have told you for the world."

"And now you're in Jumbles *versus* Hankey, and the great cotton case."

"Why, how did you know?" cried Pratt.

"I always read the law reports in the *Times*," said Fin, demurely.

Pratt choked; he felt blind; then the railings seemed to be dancing with the trees, and the little children to be transformed into cherubs, attended by angels, with triumphant perambulating cars. He felt as if he wanted to do something frantic; and it was a minute before he came to himself, and could see that the tears were running down Fin's cheeks.

"Thank you," he said at last. "Finetta—Fin—may I call you Fin?—dearest Fin, say I may."

"No, no, no," jerked out Fin, hysterically—"you mustn't do anything of the kind. Pa wouldn't approve, and Aunt Matty hates you, and—and—and I'm nearly sure I do."

"Go on hating me like this, then," cried Pratt, rapturously. "Oh, darling, you've made me so happy!"

"I haven't," protested Fin, "and I can't, and I won't. How can I, when poor darling Tiny has been so treated by that odious wretch?"

"What—Vanleigh?"

"No, you know what I mean; but he's an odious wretch, too. It's abominable. Mr. Trevor ought to be hung."

"Why?" said Pratt.

"Why?" echoed Fin. "Hasn't he jilted my poor darling, and behaved cruelly to her, after winning her heart, just as all men do?"

"No," said Pratt, stoutly.

"What!" cried Fin, "didn't I see him out with her himself, and hasn't somebody been at our house dropping hints about it—unwillingly, of course—and made pa delighted, and Aunt Matty malicious? while poor mamma has done nothing but cry, because she liked and believed in your nice friend; while as to poor Tiny, she was dangerously ill for a time."

"I don't care," said Pratt, vehemently; and he arranged an imaginary wig, and waved some non-existent papers in the air. "Matters may be against my client—I mean Dick; but I'll stake my life on his honour. I say Richard Trevor—Lloyd, as he calls himself now—is a true man of honour. Look how he gave up the estate! See how he yielded his pretensions to Miss Rea's hand! And do you dare to tell me that this is a man who would stoop to a flirtation, or worse, when he owns to being cut up by the loss he has sustained? I say it's impossible, and that the person who would dare to charge my client—friend, Richard Trevor, alias Lloyd, with such duplicity is—"

"What?" said Fin, sharply.

That one little word went through Frank Pratt. He cooled on the instant, the flush of excitement passed away, and, in a crest-fallen manner, he groaned—

"That's just like me. What a fool I am! Now you'll be cross with me."

"No, I sha'n't," said Fin, demurely. "I like it. It's nice of you to stand up for your friend. I like a man to be a trump."

Fin's face was like scarlet as soon as she made this admission; and to qualify it, she hurriedly exclaimed—

"You may like him if you please; but till I see him cleared, I shall hate him bitterly; and—and—I don't know how he ought to be punished. He'll be punished enough, though, by losing my sweet sister. Why didn't you like her, instead of some one else?" she said, archly.

"Don't ask me," said Pratt. "I'm so happy, I shall do something foolish."

"You haven't anything to be happy about," said Fin; "for I'm going to devote myself to Tiny, and if they force her into this hateful marriage, I mean to be a nun."

"What marriage?" said Pratt.

"Why, with that Bluebeard of a captain."

"And are they pushing that on?"

"Yes," said Fin, "and it's abominable. It will kill her."

"No, it won't!" said Pratt, coolly.

"Then you're a wretch!" said Fin, with flashing eyes. "I say it will."

"And I say it won't," said Pratt; "because it must never come off."

Fin stared at him.

"I'll see to that," said Pratt, confidently. "I have a friend busy about Master Captain Vanleigh. But, oh!" he exclaimed, as the recollection of one Barnard, solicitor, brought up a gentleman of the name of Mervyn—"but, oh! I say, tell me this, Fin—Mr. Mervyn—you know—there wasn't ever—anything—eh?"

"Oh, you goose!" cried Fin, stamping her foot. "Mr. Mervyn—dear Mr. Mervyn, of all people in the world!—who used to treat us like as if we were his little girls. Oh, Mr. Pratt, I did think you had some sense in your head."

"Oh, no," said Pratt, solemnly; "never—not a morsel."

Then they looked at one another, and laughed; but only for Fin to turn preternaturally serious.

"I must go back to Tiny now," she said.

"But when shall I see you again?" urged Pratt.

"Perhaps never," said Fin—"unless you can come about once a week, on a Friday afternoon, here in the square, and tell me some news that will do poor Tiny good."

"I may come and say good-bye to her, then?" said Pratt, getting hold for a moment of the little half-withdrawn hand.

"Yes, if you like. No—here's Aunt Matty."

In fact, her herald approached in the shape of Pepine, who no sooner caught sight of the retreating form of Pratt than he made a dash at him, chasing him ignominiously to the gate, where he stood barking long after his quarry had gone. But Pepine was no gainer in the end, for during the next week Fin never neglected an opportunity of administering to him a furtive thump.

CHAPTER XLVII.—NETTA'S APPEAL.

RICHARD felt very bitter as he followed Mrs. Jenkles across the road. Mingled with pity for the poor girl he was about to visit, there was a sense of resentment; for she seemed to have been the cause of pain and sorrow to one he dearly loved. And yet, how innocent and gentle she was—how unlike any one he had met before! Pity may or may not be akin to love, but certainly it was very strong in Richard's breast at the present moment.

"If you'll step in the kitchen just a moment, sir, I'll see if you can go up," said Mrs. Jenkles, smoothing her apron.

And she ushered the visitor into the clean, bright place, where Sam was seated by the fireside, looking very hard at his pipe.

"How do, sir, how do?" he said. "Take a cheer, sir."

"Thanks, no, Sam, I'll stand," said Richard, quietly. "But where's your pipe?"

"There it hangs, sir," said Sam, folding his arms and looking at it.

"No tobacco?"

"Plenty, sir," said Sam; "but I've put the pipe out at home, sir: cos why? It sets that poor gal a-coughing, and that spoils it. It's a wonder, aint it, as doctors can't do more?"

Further converse was cut short by the entrance of Mrs. Jenkles, who beckoned their visitor to come, and he followed her upstairs to the neat little front room, where a pang shot through Richard as he saw the change. Netta was half lying on a couch, propped up by pillows, and beside her, on a table, were the two plants he had sent across, evidently carefully tended,—not a withered leaf to be seen amongst their luxuriant foliage, while she who had made them her care lay there, white, shrunken, and so changed.

There was a bright smile of pleasure flickering about her lips, and a ray of gladness flashing from her eyes, as she held out her hands to him—hands that he caught in his and kissed, as he sank on his knees by her side.

"My poor girl!" he exclaimed, huskily, "is it so bad as this?"

"I'm so glad you are come," she whispered; and then she lay gazing at him, as if her very soul were passing from her eyes to his. "I've longed and prayed so for this. I thought once that it wasn't to be—that I was never to see you again; but I'm better now."

"Better—yes; and you'll soon grow strong and well again."

"Do you think so?" she said, looking at him wistfully, while an incredulous smile was upon her lips. "But don't let's talk of that. Sit down by me, where I can see you—I've so much to say."

He drew a chair to her side, and as he did so, he saw that they were alone, for Mrs. Lane had gone out softly directly he had entered. As he did so, the note which he had received fell from his pocket, and lay half beneath the couch.

"You are not angry with me for sending for you?" said the girl, piteously. "Why do you frown?"

"Did I frown?" he said, gently. "It was only a passing thought. There, now, let's have a quiet, long chat."

"Yes," she said, eagerly. "I want to thank you for being so kind to us—for the fruit and flowers, and all you have done for mamma. As for me," she continued, laying her hand in his, "I shall be so ungrateful."

"No, no, I cannot believe that."

"Yes," she said, smiling—"you have done so much to make me well, and in return I shall die."

"My dear child, you must not talk like this," exclaimed Richard, with an involuntary shiver. "You must get well and strong again."

She shook her head sadly, and then lay gazing up into his eyes.

"Netta," he said, gently, "you have thought a great deal about me since you have been ill."

"Yes—oh, yes," she said.

"Looking back, then, do you blame me—do you think I was cruel, and led you on to think I loved you?"

"No," she said, and her hand closed almost convulsively on his. "I don't think so now. I have thought it all over, and it was my folly and weakness. I seem to have grown old since then, and to have become so much wiser. That's all past now; but I want you to tell me, first, that you did not think me unmaidenly and strange."

"My child," said Richard, "I have felt that the blame has been on my side, and it has caused me many a pang."

"But it is all past now," said Netta, eagerly. "I know—I can see plainly enough. You knew better how ill I was than I did, and pitied and were very sorry for me; and it seemed so sweet to me, that—that I could not help watching for you—feeling glad when you came. But that's all past now, and you said we could be friends."

"Indeed, yes," he said, gazing into the great, brilliant eyes; but in a sad, dreamy way, for he could read but too plainly the coming end.

"And you forgive me—quite forgive me?" she murmured.

"My poor child, I have nothing to forgive," he said, leaning over and kissing her forehead.

"Thank you," she murmured, closing her eyes; and she lay silent for a few moments. Then, brightening, she said, "Now tell me again about her."

He remained silent, and she repeated her request—almost impatiently.

"Tell me her name."

He looked at her wonderingly for a few moments, before he answered, softly—

"Valentina."

"Valentina," said Netta, smiling. "Yes, a pretty name—Valentina. I shall love it as I love her."

"You love her?"

"Yes, though I have never seen her. Did you not tell me she loved you? You think me strange," she continued, smiling in his face, "but I am not. Why, if you could have loved me, I could not have stayed, and you would have been unhappy. It is for the best, and I shall know that you are content."

"Netta," said Richard, hoarsely, "you must not talk like this."

"Why not?" she said, wonderingly. "All the trouble seems past to me. Now I know you feel for me—I believe you like me. Everybody seems kind to me now, and that foolish little dream has quite passed away. Come, tell me about her. I should like to know her."

Would she come to see me—if she knew that I was dying?”

“Yes, I feel sure she would, if she knew all,” said Richard, sadly. “She is all that is gentle and good, and would have loved you dearly, Netta. You may meet yet.”

“I should like to see her,” said the girl, enthusiastically, “that I might tell her how noble and good you are. There, you see how I make an idol of my brother Richard.”

He started, and looked hard at her.

“Yes,” she said, “brother Richard—you were behaving like a dear brother to me, only I could not understand. I never had a brother, but you will be one to me still. You will not stay away, Richard, even if I love you, for it is a chastened love now—one that I need not feel ashamed to own. You’ll not stay away, but come and sit with me, and read to me, as you did before?”

He shook his head sadly.

“Yes—yes, you will come,” she cried, putting her hands together. “I shall have something to live for then—a little longer—and we can sit and talk of her—of Valentina. If you stay away—I shall die.”

It was no fiction of the lips, and Richard knew it, as her voice grew weaker, and she seemed to droop. The mark was upon her face, telling that she was one of those soon to fall, and her pitiful appeal went to his heart; and raising her in his arms, he pillowed her head upon his shoulder, and kissed her quivering, pallid lips, as in a voice broken with emotion he muttered in the familiar old sempiternal words—

“God do so to me, and more also, my poor stricken lamb, if I do not try and smooth your poor, thorny path.”

Once, and once only, did her poor, thin lips respond to his caress. Then her transparent, white hand was passed lightly over his forehead; her eyes closed, and, with a faint sigh of content, she lay quite still, her fluttering breath telling, at the end of a few minutes, that she had, thoroughly exhausted, fallen asleep.

The True Story of a Murderer.

AT the Haute Marne assizes a case has been tried, resulting in a capital sentence, the circumstances of which deserve publicity.

In 1850 a man, still young and of indifferent character, named Rambouillet, who carried on poaching with audacity and success, was surprised by the gamekeeper of a forest in the Haute Marne. An information was laid against him, and he was brought before the Correctional Tribunal, condemned to the forfeiture of his gun, to a fine, and even, I believe, to imprisonment.

Rambouillet received the sentence without a protest, acknowledging the offence imputed to him, and resolving to turn over a new leaf. He kept his pledge, and from 1850 to 1870 he laid himself open to no reproach. He seemed bent on blotting out by his good conduct the stigma of his condemnation. When he met the gamekeeper he avoided looking at him, not with the air of a man harbouring a grudge, but like a man prevented by shame from encountering the witness of his fault. It was observed, however, that he often isolated himself from others, and frequently passed his time in wandering about the fields without its being known

whither he directed his steps. This also was attributed to regret for his delinquency.

He regained public esteem, and his son married honourably. Strange to say, Rambouillet was governed for twenty years by a single idea—that of vengeance. His apparent contrition, the rectitude of his conduct, his sadness, and his gestures were all directed towards one aim—vengeance.

For twenty years, morning, noon, and night, he laid wait for the gamekeeper against whom he had vowed vengeance, and for twenty years that vengeance escaped him. In 1870 the war broke out, the Haute Marne was invaded, the forest in which the gamekeeper lived was occupied by the German troops.

One December night, Rambouillet, whom every one supposed to be at a distance from the neighbourhood, took his gun, slunk from tree to tree through the Germans occupying the forest, and, at the risk of being captured and shot, facing the greatest perils, and resorting to the most audacious stratagems, creeping almost on a level with the ground, he succeeded in reaching the gamekeeper’s lonely cottage. There was a light in the window. The gamekeeper and his wife lost in this solitude, amid hostile troops, were seated side by side.

Rambouillet watched them some time through the clearing surrounding the cottage. The gamekeeper remained motionless by his wife in spite of the furious barking of his dogs; for since the enemy had occupied the forest, the dogs had always barked every night. Rambouillet raised his gun, took a careful aim, and fired. Two despairing cries were uttered inside the cottage, the dogs redoubled their noise, all around distant cries of “Woher da” were heard, and Rambouillet hurried along the paths, escaped, and disappeared from the district.

The next day it was told how the Germans had killed the gamekeeper’s wife, and all the neighbourhood mustered at her funeral.

Peace was signed, Rambouillet resumed his former life. The occupation ceased, and then everybody ventured to express the horror excited by so cowardly a crime committed against a woman sitting peaceably at her hearth.

Rambouillet had become more gloomy. A gnawing despair had penetrated his heart. He had committed a useless crime. Not only had his vengeance escaped him, but he felt that any attempt against the gamekeeper would recall attention to the crime of 1870, and would divert suspicion from the German soldiers. His irritation increased every day, and often found vent in threats against those around him.

A few weeks ago one of these scenes was repeated between Rambouillet and his son’s daughter.

“Ah, yes,” exclaimed the latter, “you want to serve me as you served the gamekeeper’s wife; but I am not afraid of you.”

Rambouillet flinched. The conversation became known, and reached the ears of justice. Rambouillet was arrested, convicted, condemned to death. The jury answered every question put to them affirmatively, and without extenuating circumstances. They felt that a man who had plotted revenge for twenty years must have acted with premeditation. The prisoner’s counsel had, of course, urged as an extenuating circumstance that he mistook his victim.



Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER XI.—THE GENEROUS RESOLVE.

THAT evening, Ruby Framlingham saw Arthur Pembrose at his office. She came unknown to her father, a letter privately conveyed during the day to Arthur having apprised him of her intention. That letter had caused him the most exquisite delight, and the most intense torture. To receive a line from Ruby was to receive an inestimable treasure. The thought of seeing her filled his heart with rapture. But when he remembered their last interview and its crushing and humiliating close, he could hardly doubt what had prompted this visit, and there was gall and wormwood in the reflection.

"She loves him," he decided, "and comes to me to learn the truth as to his condition. To me, of all the world!"

With this impression, he received her with mingled feelings—with a tingling sensation of rapture, such as her mere presence was always sufficient to excite, and with a jealous pang that lacerated his very heart.

She saw that he was ill and agitated—saw and pitied, and offered her hand with a frank smile.

"I have come, Mr. Pembrose," she said, "because I owe you an apology, and because it was necessary that we should meet."

Taken by surprise at this greeting, he had no word to say, but trembled and stammered out he knew not what.

"That apology from her lips could never be necessary," he said, or thought he said; for the words came to his ears, deafened by the violent beating of his heart, as an echo, or as if uttered by another.

"Yes," Ruby persisted—and it was strange that he lost no word that fell from *her* mouth—"both papa and myself treated you when we last met in a way that I am pained to remember. He did not hide that he discredited your statements and smiled at your surmises; while I—I—what shall I say? How shall I defend myself? You will forgive us, will you not?"

"Believe me," he replied, pained at her earnestness, "there is nothing to forgive. I strove to do my duty, and perhaps exceeded it. I had no claim on Mr. Framlingham's belief—"

"Yes, every claim. You were sincere? That was enough. But how can I blame my father when I myself harboured a momentary suspicion against you, at the remembrance of which I blush? I trembled with apprehension when I heard that you were to watch that night by Harcourt's bedside. Heaven knows what my fears were. I cannot put them into words; but I knew that you were foes, and—"

"Enough, enough," interposed Arthur, hurriedly. "You pain yourself to recall words uttered in a moment of excitement. Pray let the past be the past."

"And you forgive—all?"

"With my whole heart."

Satisfied at having thus far made amends for past injustice, Ruby passed on to inquire into such particulars of Harcourt's state as she desired to know. But it was startling to Arthur Pembrose to observe the coolness and calmness with which these inquiries were

made, and the little effect his replies appeared to produce.

All was so different to the manner in which the news of the attempted assassination had been received. Then a painful excitement, suppressed with obvious effort, had been visible; now there was no emotion, only the earnest attention of a patient listener. This startled him. He could not understand it; but then he was not skilled in the ways of women, in their feelings or their passions. He believed that love was paramount; that, as he had said, "the woman who loves once, loves always." He did not make allowance for the strength of resentment, based on love, or for the strength of that indignation which fires the heart of the true woman when she feels that she is scorned and slighted for another.

The first blow of the fatal discovery Ruby had made had not wholly crushed out all care for the man who had cruelly deserted her. She could not hear the news of disaster befalling him with perfect calmness and equanimity. She was human. More, she was a woman, with all a woman's weakness and tenderness. The mere instincts of her heart made her weak. But that weakness only lasted for awhile. With the reaction came the sense of the wrong this man had done her, and the remembrance of how she had pledged herself to revenge that wrong. And with these thoughts and remembrances she nerved herself to the fulfilment of her part of the compact—to hunt the villain to the death.

This was why she listened with calmness to all that Arthur Pembrose had to pour into her ears.

As he concluded, she rose from the seat she had occupied.

"All this," she said, "confirms the suspicions we have entertained. My father, angry as he is with Harcourt, doubts if he is capable of what you suspect. I have no such doubts, and one thing is clear—Eva Knowles must not be sacrificed to this man. She must be saved. She is my friend, and I will save her."

"You—will—save her?" Arthur asked in amazement.

"Yes; or at least, I will make the attempt. You look incredulous! Why, what is there so marvellous in this? I repeat, Eva is my friend. I cannot blame her, and why should I suffer her to be made the victim of this man's villainy?"

"But if your motives should be misconstrued?"

"Impossible! and remember, you have resolved to save my father in spite of himself. Shall I be less generous toward my friend?"

Arthur Pembrose had his misgivings; but finding Ruby determined, he urged no further objections to her generous resolve, and soon after she took her leave.

CHAPTER XII.—"PITIED! DESPISED!"

IF there had been a funeral in the house, it could not have been more gloomy.

That was Aunt Effra's opinion touching her brother's mansion—an opinion expressed quite frankly and openly fifty times a day, with such comments on the stupidity of the English, as displayed in their feelings and emotions, as happened to suggest themselves.

The provocation to these displays of eloquence was her niece Eva's indulgence in a childish excess of grief over Edmund Harcourt's misfortune. The news had filled Eva with despair. She was overwhelmed with

gloomy apprehensions as to her lover's fate, and refused to be comforted.

It was her first love and her first grief.

Excess of emotion might therefore have been pardonable; but Aunt Effra "hadn't patience" with the extent to which it found expression. And, indeed, it was aggravating to a lady who had passed through life without suffering much from love, or having to endure greatly on account of lovers, to be constantly exposed to this spectacle of despairing affection. Besides, it interfered so tiresomely with the round of enjoyment which Aunt Effra regarded as "life."

Eva would go nowhere. It was only in obedience to her father's express orders that she went down to dinner, and then appeared "a perfect fright"—as she was assured—with red eyelids, and red eyes, and flushed cheeks, and a funeral expression of face painful to behold. At other times she lay on the sofa in the inner drawing-room, her head buried in the pillows, and her blonde hair tossing about in a state of entanglement and disorder. She would not speak, or read, or play; she would only weep and moan.

This was obviously trying to the well-preserved spinster destined to be her companion, and who was not overburdened with sympathy, and hated to be made miserable.

"Some people," Aunt Effra explained for the benefit of all whom it might concern—"some people had troubles, and some people made them. For her part, she could sympathize with *real* distress, but didn't believe in gratuitous misery. But there, what was the use of talking? Of all the obstinate, self-willed, and wrong-headed people about, none were so obstinate, so self-willed, and wrong-headed as your little chits with blue eyes and blonde hair, who looked as if you could twist them round your little finger, and were as stubborn as steel. English girls especially; for abroad, of course, such displays of temper were unknown. But there, the English are so excessively stupid!"

Eva heard this, or words to this effect, from morning till night; but it did not affect her. She did not raise her head from the pillows, and only answered with a moan.

It happened towards evening, when the slanting rays of a fierce sun were shining into the drawing-room, and turning Eva's blonde hair to gold, that a servant entered and announced a visitor. Aunt Effra had retired to her room, and Eva was alone. Without raising her head, or asking who it might be, she protested that she would see no one.

"Yes, Eva, dear," cried a musical voice, "I am sure you will see me. You will give me a few minutes, for I have much to say to you."

Eva looked up, with a flushed and troubled face.

"Ruby!" she exclaimed with mingled surprise and confusion.

It was Ruby Framlingham, who, anticipating a refusal from the tone in which the servant had received her, had followed him into the room, and now stood gazing at Eva through the gloom of a veil which hid her face.

"You are surprised to see me, Eva?" said Ruby, as the servant quitted the room; "you thought we should meet no more?"

"I—I was afraid—" Eva faltered.

"That what had passed would raise an insurmount-

able barrier between us, old friends as we are? It might, perhaps it should, have done so; but, you see, I come to you in your grief, and offer you my hand, as of old."

She held out her hand as she spoke. Eva seized it with an avidity in which there was something hysterical.

"Oh, Ruby!" she exclaimed, "I did not mean to wrong you. Indeed, indeed, I did not. He swore to me that he had never loved you; that no word of love had passed between you. He said—"

"Enough! I heard all. If there is anything to forgive, I have forgiven you; and I come to you now as your friend, your true friend, to give you a word of warning and advice, for which you will one day be grateful to me."

She was so serious, so calm, and yet so intensely in earnest, that Eva looked at her in alarm, and her lips quivered.

"You are so serious," she muttered.

"It is well that I should be so," was the answer, "for I have to speak to you of serious things. Eva, you love, or think you love, this Edmund Harcourt. I know what you would say. You would tell me that he is dearer than life to you, that you are dying with grief at the bare thought of what he is suffering, and that you could never survive his loss. I read your feelings, for they are the reflection of my own; for, Eva, in spite of what he swore to you, in spite of all his protestations, I did love Harcourt, and he knew it."

The expression of the listener's face changed.

There was disparagement of Harcourt in these words, and she was quick to resent, and to put herself on the defensive.

"If you are come to reproach me and to slander him," she exclaimed, with a sudden display of spirit, "if you choose this time, when he is ill—oh, it is very, very cruel!"

She began to weep. Ruby gave her no time to say more.

"Eva," she exclaimed, in a cold and measured voice, "I have no reproaches for you; but I have come here as a friend to warn you, and to save you, if possible, from a danger into which you are rushing blindfold. The duty I have undertaken is inexpressibly painful to me, because it exposes me to the certainty almost of having my motives misconstrued. Nothing is more natural than that you should say that I came here, prompted by malice, to try and abuse your mind, and so serve my own jealous ends. I feel that you may regard my conduct in that light; but I am sustained by the consciousness of the absolute purity of my motives, the truth of what I shall assert, and the certainty that one day both will be vindicated."

"You do come to speak against Edmund, then?" Eva demanded, fiercely.

"I come to warn you that he is not what he seems," replied Ruby, steadily, not at all moved by the rising fire agitating her companion; "and to offer you such an insight into his past life as will convince you of it."

Eva started up.

"And I refuse to listen to you. Ruby Framlingham," she said, "I will hear nothing against him, least of all from you."

"Take care, Eva," Ruby answered, quietly; "think, and you will convince yourself that it is from no light motive that I have undertaken this painful duty. You see to what I am exposing myself. Cannot you see

also that I am prompted to this by something more than mere feeling—mere rivalry for one who has ceased to care for me?"

But Eva was in no mood to listen to reason, or to be convinced by argument.

"It is truly kind of you," she replied, with bitterness—"truly kind to come to me, and try to undermine my affection for Harcourt, at a time when he is unable to defend himself against slanderous attacks or base insinuations. I thank you, but I have heard enough."

"Nay, one thing further you must hear," returned Ruby; "you refuse to listen to me—you will neither believe in my sincerity nor accept the proofs of it. A time will come when you will wish you had done both. When it does, I do not ask you to come to me, to humiliate yourself as I am humiliated before you, but I give you this paper. It contains the address of one who can substantiate what I would have said. Take it. I do not ask you even to read it now; but preserve it. And when the time comes for its use, you will acknowledge that, in spite of appearances, Ruby was still your true friend."

Eva took the proffered paper, but did not deign a glance at it. Without a word, she crossed the room to where a fire burned in the grate, and then, tearing the paper across and across, dropped it into the flames.

"You have my answer," she said, bitterly.

"I have your answer—yes," cried Ruby, stung out of the calmness and measured tone she had hitherto persevered in; "but, oh, Eva, let me entreat, let me implore you not to persist in this infatuation. Trust me, for God's sake, trust me when I declare to you that Harcourt is unworthy of your love, and will only bring you misery and misfortune. Your soul is pure; your heart is true. Eva, there is no purity, no truth in this man. I have discovered his baseness; I know of what he is capable. I tremble for your future should you persist in trusting him blindly and fondly to the end. I do not ask you to take my word, though I do ask that you should accept it as the word of a friend; but I implore you to consult those who can inform you of all that it is of such vital moment you should know. I have not influenced them. They know nothing of my love—of its beginning or its end. They know only what has been the past career of this man, of what he is capable, and what end awaits him. Be advised, consult them, and let me have the satisfaction of knowing that I have not exposed myself to suspicion and degradation in vain. Promise me that you will do this, Eva, and I will trouble you no more!"

In her earnestness, she grasped with her hand the arm of the infatuated girl. As she ceased, Eva shook off the hand as if it had been a viper.

"I will not promise," she said, "I will not be guided by your insinuations or your advice. Why should I risk my happiness to feed your malice? Because Edmund has thrown you off, you can only regard him through the medium of your own bitter feelings and deadly animosities. And you come to me—to me of all others! hoping to work on my feelings and to bend me to your wicked purposes. I thought better of you, Ruby; I still believe that you were once my true friend; but not now—not now. I pity you. I will try not to despise you."

She turned away.

A groan of anguish, not to be suppressed, burst from Ruby's lips.

"Oh, Eva, Eva!" she cried, raising her hands in agony of supplication. "Do not let us part thus!"

But there was no response from Eva's lips. She stood with averted face, grasping at the head of the couch from which she had risen, and beating time nervously with her foot.

Ruby waited a second or two, still hoping; then, with hands still clasped, tottered towards the door.

Even then a half-expectation rose within her heart that the proud girl might relent, might display some lingering feeling of trust in her, and confidence in her motives. So she lingered, but lingered in vain. When, in a second or two, the averted face was turned towards her, it was fierce and defiant.

There was no hope.

Convinced of this, Ruby quitted the room.

"Pitied! despised!" she ejaculated, as the door closed behind her. "Heaven help me to forget those words! They are bitter and hard to bear; but—I have done my duty."

Sustained by that reflection she went her way.

The Man in the Open Air.

A PATENT was granted in the year 1796 to Lord William Murray for his discovery of extracting starch from horse-chestnuts; and a paste or size has been made from them, which is preferred by bookbinders, shoemakers, and paperhangers to that made from wheaten flour. They contain a soapy quality, and are used in some parts of France and Switzerland for cleaning woollens and for the washing and bleaching of linen; and if ground and made into cakes or balls, it is supposed they might answer the purpose of soap.

So it may be said that horse-chestnuts "are not to be sneezed at." Yet this would not be true, for if a small portion of them, in a state of powder, be snuffed up the nostrils, it excites sneezing in a remarkable degree; and even an infusion or decoction of it has been said to produce the same effect. It has consequently been administered in some complaints of the head and eyes, and has been productive of considerable benefit. Would not snuff manufacturers do well to look to this material rather than to powdered glass, to give pungency to their compounds? Glass is surely more disposed to give a *pane* in the head than to remove a complaint. The prickly husks may be used with advantage in the tanning of leather.

The wood is white, soft, and of little value. It, however, serves occasionally for water-pipes and for turners' ware. In some parts of the Continent the bark is used in the cure of intermittent and other fevers, and some writers are of opinion that it might with advantage be substituted in several complaints for Peruvian bark.

To those who would dive yet more into the science of this tree, we may add that it is of the class *Heptandria* (*Monognia Æsculus hippocastanum*), bearing leaves, each composed of seven large lobes, the fruit enclosed in a roundish capsule or seed vessel, beset with spines, and divided into three cells, which latter when the fruit is ripe breaks up, and often causes the nuts to rebound to some distance. Each flower con-

sists of five petals of white colour, irregularly spotted with red and yellow, and roundish, but undulated or waved at the edges. But these hues vary, as may be seen in Hampton Park, where a few pinkish flowered trees blend in exquisite harmony with their fellows.

Should no rain intervene, this galaxy of blossom will last full a week or ten days more; and as it is a sight of real splendour not to be enjoyed to the full elsewhere so near to London, it ought not to be missed by those who love nature in her gayest attire.

We do not recollect ever seeing many bird-nests in the horse-chestnut trees. It may be that the bird-like nature of the protective out-leaves of the enormous buds at bursting-time deters the feathered choir from hazarding their plumage amongst such a lot of sticky stuff.

"Queen Dido sat at her palace gate, darning a hole in her stocking, O!" is a fact that must be taken as a proof of the aristocracy of such domestic industry. But Queen Dido, in her majestic zeal that her sovereign's toes should not go uncovered, or his feet blister for want of due uniformity in his hose, could scarcely have guessed that one day the ever active and practical mind of the Americans—there were no Americans, by the bye, in those days—would have invented a machine that would never be too late to mend (stockings), as it contrives to do, as we are told, "in next to no time." "Imagine," says the *Scientific American*, "ye mothers of large families, who ruefully contemplate dilapidated socks by the dozen, after the week's washing, with visions of strained eyes and tired backs floating across your minds—imagine a little apparatus infinitely more simple than the sewing machine, which repairs the hugest darn in much less time than we can describe the operation, and far more neatly than you can do it with all your years of practice." This appears to be well corroborated, and we learn that the instrument is actually in use. The inventor is Mr. O. S. Hosmer, of Boston, and already blessings are being showered upon his head by the entire female community.

The sums paid for the destruction of wild animals and vermin entail a considerable expense to many Governments, from which, in the United Kingdom, we are happily free. In the West Indian sugar plantations, the destruction of rats is paid for. The damage done by each wolf in France is calculated at 1,000 francs' worth of cattle, altogether 2,000,000 francs, or £80,000. The mischief, however, indirectly far exceeds this, as the farmers have the additional expense of the extra care of some twenty million sheep.

The whole of this loss is caused by 1,000 breeding wolves, the number of whelps born in May and June being perhaps 2,500. An average of 1,800 are killed annually, and yet it is believed that in April something like 2,000 wolves are actively depredating. It is considered, by proper measures, these vermin would be exterminated within four or five years. This state of things is rather different from the prevailing system in the States with regard to such animals. There, we read, as much as ten dollars is paid for every wild cat scalp—the destroying capacity of which cannot equal that of the wolves described as prevailing in France.

The poisonous snakes destroyed in the Punjab between the months of April and August last year

amounted to the surprising number of 19,848, for which rewards at the rate of two annas (3d.) a head were paid by the local Government. Four hundred non-venomous snakes, for whose destruction no reward was paid, were also brought in by the police: altogether, 20,000 snakes destroyed in four months is not so bad. Of these, 19,000 were either *Bangarus Carubus* (*Karait*), or varieties of the same species, and only thirty-six specimens of the *Echis carniata*. Coloured clay models of these two species have been supplied to the police, as well as drawings of the jaws and teeth, by which specimens brought in can be more surely identified. An instance has occurred of one man receiving a hundred rupees (£10) for the snakes brought in by him to an assistant district superintendent of police in one month. In the Madras Presidency, during the first three quarters of the past year (1875), no less than 1,265 bullocks, 1,290 cows, 537 calves, 534 buffaloes, 460 sheep, 554 goats, 86 horses and ponies, 27 asses, 133 dogs, and 50 pigs were destroyed by tigers and cheetahs.

Queer Cards.

CHAPTER VI.—A BLACK JOB.

"WE were ordered to sea again without my having another chance of seeing her, and were battling about, with one or two sharp runs, and an engagement with a pirate schooner that we took just before she went down; but I won't tell you about that, because at last we went back again to Kingston.

"I'd expected to get leave ashore while we were being refitted, and was standing one night watching the lights away in the higher town, and wondering whether I should find my mistress, and whether her father was still alive, when I saw a figure standing on the poop ladder. As plain as I see any of you, I saw it; and it was the little lady as had come aboard—Miss Rose's little girl.

"I tried to rub the mist out of my eyes; but when I looked again, there she was, just for a second, holding out her hand as if she wanted me to come to her. I cried out so loud, as I ran that way, that the bo'sun came up to hear what was the matter, and I told him what I'd seen. Praps it mightn't have been believed on shore; but sailors, you see, are used to such wonders as landsmen never know anything about, and the story soon got into the officers' mess.

"Now, I was to go ashore the next day, and four other men—steady, good seamen, and part of my boat's crew—had leave at the same time; and so I made bold to go to our second lieutenant (the same as I went down to Portsmouth with), to ask whether we mightn't go overnight; for I felt that there was something wrong with Miss Rose and her babies, and was like a man in a trance.

"Well, we got leave, and what's more, we all managed to get a pistol a-piece. Once ashore—for I'd told my mates the best part of my story, and they were all true men, and stuck to me like Britons, as they were—we all turned sharp off along the road leading away to Mr. Pierrot's plantation, only stopping to cut a good stout cudgel for each of us as we went along.

"We went at a regular pace with all sail on, I can tell you, till we got to the edge of the plantation, where

there was a great thicket of trees and shrubs, that looked almost black in the bright night.

"We should have gone round to the back of the house somewhere, if I hadn't seen two or three lights moving about down in the lower grounds among the trees; but, as it was, we all stood still, for there was a noise of talking inside the thicket; and when we managed to shin up one or two of the stems, we could see three or four torches flaring about, and a white man standing on a pile of wood, speaking to a lot of niggers round him.

"It was too far off to hear what they said, but they looked like a lot of fiends, their eyes rollin' about, and some of 'em actually sticking knives into the logs of wood, and working themselves up into a regular frenzy. John Harnet—that was one of our men—said he'd seen the same thing once before, and that the niggers were going to attack somebody; he'd been in a nigger riot once, and they went on in just the same way, he told us. So we agreed to skirt round to the house, and see whether anybody had got scent of what was coming.

"They had; for when we reached the open road, there were lights moving about at the windows, where it seemed that people were busy putting up some sorts of barricades of woodwork.

"After getting over a thick hedge, precious full of prickles (for, it seems, pretty well all the flowers and things grow prickly in some parts of the world), we got round to the house sheds; and, seeing a lantern moving about in one of 'em, I went forward and knocked at the door.

"It wasn't opened; but a big, ugly nigger held the lantern up to a little trap that was cut in it, and looked out.

"There aint nobody 'tome,' says he, 'and dere's nuffin 't eat but soap an' candlums; you couldn't come in nohow.'

"And he was going to shut the trap, but I poked the end of my stick through it.

"Tell your master I've come to see him,' I said; 'and say that I've got something particular to report to him from the ship *Basilisk*.'

"Oh, ah—yah, ah!" grinned master nigger; 'massa Capen Styles in de *Basilisk*. You jes' stop half a seculum.'

"When he came back, I heard somebody with him, and presently Mr. Pierrot looked through the trap.

"Is Captain Styles there?" says he.

"No; but he's in Kingston on shore," I said. "I suppose you know there's something wrong on your plantation, and if I can bear a hand to help you, here's four of my mates that'll see it out any way, come what will."

"Why, how did you hear of it?" says he. "If it's known up yonder, why don't they send help? I've nobody but Mr. Feene and old Pompey here, and the women; for Jack went away hours ago to bring assistance, and I'm afraid he's waylaid."

"You let us in, sir, and I'll tell you how we come to know it," says I.

"And presently the bolts shot back, and we all went inside. Not too soon, either, for we saw lights moving in the fields in front; so I couldn't stop to tell him just then; but I no sooner got into the big dining-room than up jumps the little lady, bigger and taller by a good deal than I expected—for, you see, I'd seen her

standing on the ladder just like she was, without allowing for time past since—and she says—

"Oh, here's my sailor; I knew he'd come to help us."

"Well, I was struck all of a heap for a minute; but there was no time to lose, and we began to make all ship-shape.

"We'd just got a lot of furniture in front of the windows commanding the verandah, and I'd put each man in his post, when in walks Mr. Feene, as yellow as a guinea, and, of course, a regular, cranky-looking old toad by this time.

"I hear you've come to give us some assistance," says he; "but who told you to move all the furniture in this way?"

"He spoke just the same as he had spoke to me the first time I saw him, when he chucked the carpet bag at me; and I had to swallow something in my throat to keep from swearing.

"You'll just do as I tell you, my men," he says, 'or else there'll be no pay. I'll show you how to prepare for these black scoundrels.'

"Jack Harnet walks up and puts his pistol down on the table, where there were four long fowling-pieces lying, and a lot of powder and shot.

"Pay be hanged!" said he, looking the old man right in the face; 'we've come here with Bill Hawker, and him we'll stick to. If so be we're not wanted, it's only a walk back to the harbour; and if so be Bill's been led here by a sperrit, which he has—amen!—then he knows what to do.'

"And Jack folded his arms, and waited to hear what there was to be answered.

"When Jack mentioned my name, I saw Miss Rose (or, that is, Madame Pierrot) start up out of the chair, where she'd been lying with the baby in her arms; and now she came close to me, and put her hand on my shoulder.

"Is your name Bill Hawker?" she says.

"I told her it was, and how I'd seen her little child that night; and, as I went on, I saw the old man turn more and more yellow.

"But there was no time to say more, for we heard a trampling of feet outside, and presently a shout; and then one of my men (behind a heavy table at a window) fired, and a black dropped down from a balcony rail where he'd swung himself up.

"The white fellow that we'd seen in the thicket was there. He kept in the background, too far off for our pistols to reach him; but as the niggers got out of the way of our fire, he hounded 'em on again like so many demons.

"Twice old Feene loaded the fowling-piece and tried to hit him; but the smoke and flare of the torches made everything confused, and all we could see was a furious mob. At last they all made a rush together; and, before we could do much damage, a dozen of 'em had climbed up into the balcony.

"They all had knives or cutlasses, but no pistols as far as I could see, though there had been some shots fired from below. It was such close quarters, and so dark, that we couldn't do much; and I called out to Mr. Pierrot to take his wife away (for she'd been there all along), and to see to the fastenings at the back.

"We might have kept the windows if it hadn't been for old Feene, and he seemed to get completely mad

with rage, and showed himself first at one open space and then at another, shrieking at the niggers.

"It seemed to be him that they wanted, for the first rush when they got on the balcony was to the window where he'd been standing; and, before we could prevent it, half a dozen of them were in the room, and the old man was flung senseless and half-strangled against the wall, with a gash across his face.

"I'd have given a month's pay for a cutlass, but it was no use, and our pistols were only half of 'em loaded; but we'd got our heavy cudgels, and all rushed at the blacks before they knew where we'd come from.

"I should like you to have heard 'em crack over their cocoa-nuts; but, bless you, it was no use hardly, unless you hit 'em about the neck, for their heads 'll bear anything a'most. But they hadn't time to use their knives much, when Mr. Pierrot rushes in with one of the loaded fowling-pieces and blazes away right amongst 'em.

"Then we beat 'em back into the balcony, and pitched over such as didn't drop of themselves, and there was a calm for a bit, while we looked to Mr. Feene. It was going hard with him, and Pompey carried him away, to bathe his face and try to bring him round.

"The worst was to come. We hadn't long to wait before we saw a dozen blazing torches passed from hand to hand, and there stood the white man pointing to different parts of the house.

"We knew what was coming—they meant to burn us out.

"I'd made up my mind what to do, if my men would only stand by me, and called them into the middle of the room. It was awful long odds; but they were all good men and true, that had looked death in the face many a time; and I asked Mr. Pierrot to bring his wife back again, with the two children. There was only a minute to spare, but I had time to say—

"Miss Rose, I've tried at last to remember the message you sent to me years ago; and, if I never see you again alive, I humbly hope we shall meet again for all that."

The Seat of a Massacre.

SALONICA, which has just gained so unenviable a notoriety, is only second to Constantinople in its importance as a commercial city of Turkey in Europe. It is built on the face of a steep hill, which rises from the shore of the gulf of the same name, and is enclosed by a lofty white wall of five miles in circuit. Surrounded, as is usual in Turkey, with cypresses and other evergreens, it presents an extremely bright and picturesque appearance when seen from the sea. The interior, however, so far from gratifying one's expectations, is miserable in the extreme in its general aspect, although in cleanliness and comfort it surpasses most of the other Turkish towns. Many of the mosques, which are its principal buildings, were originally Christian churches. A triumphal arch, belonging to the time of Marcus Aurelius, is still to be seen in ruins within the citadel, which is the ancient Acropolis; the latter is called by the Turks Vedi-Kulch, or the Seven Towers. Among the other antiquities of Salonica may be mentioned the Arches of Constantine and Augustus—the latter having been erected after the

Battle of Philippi—and the Propylæum of the ancient Hippodrome, a grand Grecian colonnade of five pillars. There is also the Rotunda, a building erected after the model of the Roman Pantheon.

Therma was the designation by which Salonica was originally known, and by that name it is mentioned in the accounts of the march of Xerxes, King of Persia, with his immense army, through Greece. About 315 B.C. it was rebuilt by Cassander, and it has been surmised that by him it was called after his wife, Thessalonica. It was the principal station of the fleet of Macedonia during the wars between that country and Rome. For three hundred years it was the most important city of Greece.

In 1313 Salonica was given up by the Greek Emperor to the Venetians, but some years later it was taken by the Turks under Amurath I. Its fame as a Christian city is well known to us, if only by the Epistles to the Thessalonians; and when we read of the late outrage whereby two consuls were killed, in consequence of the dispute which arose concerning the abduction of a Bulgarian Christian girl, who had been converted to Mohammedanism, we seem carried back to the days of the Christian persecutions.

The murder of the consuls was made the excuse for the great European Powers to send their fleets to Salonica, ostensibly to protect their subjects, but just at a time when the Eastern question was in a peculiar state, and England had refused to enter into the matter. There was a smell of powder in the air, and symptoms that threatened trouble sooner than peace. Just at this time, when all eyes looked anxiously towards the East, the difficulty was solved; for we received the announcement that the Sultan had been deposed, and his nephew, Mourad Effendi, proclaimed in his stead, without bloodshed, and amidst universal rejoicing.

The late Sultan is removed to the old Palace in Stamboul, and Mourad is pledged to a Constitutional Government.

Abdul Aziz Khan, Sultan, Refuge of the World, and Shadow of God, the thirty-third sovereign of the dynasty of Othman, and the twenty-sixth since the conquest of Constantinople, now deposed, was born on the 9th of February, 1830, and was the second son of the Sultan Mahmoud II., and the brother of the Sultan Abdul Medjid. His accession to the throne took place on the 25th June, 1861, and he has consequently scarcely attained the average length of rule which his ancestors reached—namely, seventeen years, counting from the coronation of Othman in 1299. His early life was spent in seclusion; he was educated by a French tutor, and, it is said, spoke English fairly well. At his accession great things were prophesied of him; his first public act was to confirm the Hatti-Humayoun, which gave to all his subjects full liberty of worship, freedom of religion, equality before the law for everybody, and the right of foreigners to possess property.

Mourad Effendi, the new Caliph and Sultan, is the eldest son of Abdul Medjid, the predecessor of Abdul Aziz. He was born on September 21st, 1840; was one of the fourteen nephews and nieces of the late Sultan; and, by the law which prevails in Turkey, had priority of succession over either of the five children who were born to Abdul Aziz. Of his personal character comparatively little is known; but he is reported to be a man of considerable energy, firmly allied to the Young

Turkey party, whose cry is "Turkey for the Turks!" and strongly opposed to the influence of Russia in the councils of the Mussulman nation. For the last few

So now Salonica knows a new lord. Holders of Turkish bonds are hopeful, and matters look brighter; but it is to be feared that the bitterness between Turk and



MOSQUE OF SALONICA.

weeks he has been placed under confinement, the late Sultan being apparently afraid that the movement of the Softas would result in an attempted revolution.

Christian, which resulted in the slaughter of the German and French consuls in the mosque, and the narrow escape of our own, will endure to the end.

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER XLVIII.—WAITING FOR NEWS.

THE weeks went on, and glided into months. Frank Pratt had been as punctual as a clock in his visits to Russell-square, but his love matters made no progress. Unless he had something to communicate affecting Tiny, Fin would hardly stay a minute. Then, too, at times, there were checks caused by the presence of Aunt Matty, when Pratt would return to his chambers disconsolate, and yet happy at having had a glimpse of the darling of his heart.

Once, when he had entered strongly into his affairs, and spoke of trying to renew his acquaintance in a straightforward way with the family—

"Because I should not be ashamed to meet Sir Hampton now," he said—

Fin responded, coolly—

"I'm afraid I hate you very much, Mr. Pratt."

"Hate me! Why?" he exclaimed.

"Because you're so unfeeling."

"Unfeeling?"

"You think so much of yourself, and your silly love nonsense, when poor Tiny is persecuted and tortured by that hateful Vanleigh, who only wants her money. I believe he'd ill-treat her before they'd been married a month. He looks like a wife-beater."

"But they never persecute you," said Pratt.

"Don't they? Why, only this morning pa told me that he should expect me to receive Sir Felix Landells; while ma cried, and Aunt Matty nodded her head approvingly."

"And—and what did you say?" cried Pratt.

"I gave Pepine a vicious kick, and walked out of the room. And now, sir, if you please, how about all your fine promises? What have you done all these months? Have you got that wicked wretch Trevor back his property? Come, speak!"

"No," said Pratt. "I went down on Tuesday to see how things were, and Master Humphrey seems settling down comfortably enough. Quite the country squire."

"Serve Richard Trevor right," said Fin. "And now, about that girl? Does he go to see her still?"

Pratt was silent.

"How dare you stand there like that, Frank, and not answer me?" cried Fin.

"Call me Frank again, darling, and I'll say anything you wish."

"I won't," said Fin. "You shall tell me without."

"I don't like telling tales about poor Dick," said Pratt.

"If you care for me, sir, it's your duty to tell me the honest truth about everything. Am I less than Richard Trevor?"

Bodily, of course, she was; but as she meant in his regards, he said she was all the world to him.

"Now, then," said Fin, "does he go to see that girl now?"

"Yes," said Pratt; "but I'm sure it's all in innocence. The poor girl is in a dying state. I went to see her with him once, and a sweeter creature you never saw."

"Then she has captivated you, too?" cried Fin, viciously.

"Oh, come—I say!" exclaimed Pratt. "Fin, that goes right to my heart."

"And now about Vanleigh. You've boasted over and over again that you could produce something which would put a stop to his pretensions—where is it?"

"You are so hard on a poor fellow," said Pratt. "I am trying my best, and I feel quite sure that he has no right to pretend to the hand of your sister; but then, you know, before one makes such a charge, there must be good personal and documentary evidence."

"Well," exclaimed Fin, "and where is it?"

"I haven't got it yet," said Pratt; "but I have tried very, very hard. I shall succeed, though, yet, I know."

"And while you are succeeding, poor Tiny is to be sacrificed?"

"Oh, no; not so bad as that. I don't despair of seeing Dick back at Penreife, and your dear sister its mistress."

"Then I do," cried Fin, bitterly; "for she's drifting into a state of melancholy, and will let them persuade her to do what they wish. She thinks Richard has given her up, and deceived her; and soon she won't care whether she lives or dies."

"But, Fin—" said Pratt.

"Miss Rea, if you please, Mr. Pratt," said the girl, formally.

"Don't be hard on me," he pleaded. "I'm trying my best, and if I can only get some one to speak, I shall have the whole thing at my fingers' ends."

"Then the sooner you do the better," said Fin, sharply. "Good-bye."

"One moment, dear," whispered Pratt.

"Well, what is it?" said Fin.

"Give me one kind look, you beautiful little darling," whispered Pratt.

Fin made a grimace, and then, as if in spite of herself, her bright eyes beamed on him for a moment ere she withdrew them.

"And now tell me this," whispered Pratt; "if they say any more to you about Landells, or if he speaks to you, you'll—you'll—you'll—"

"There, good-bye!" cried Fin. "How can you be such a goose? I haven't patience with you—good-bye."

There was a look accompanying that good-bye that sent a thrill through Frank Pratt, and he went back to his musty briefs as light as if treading on air.

On reaching his chambers, though, it was to find Barnard, the solicitor, waiting for him.

"Well, what news?" was Pratt's greeting.

"Nothing more," was the reply. "I've sent, and I've been myself. That this Vanleigh has compromised himself in some way, so that his marriage is impossible, I feel convinced; but a solution of the matter can only come from one pair of lips."

"Well?"

"And they remain obstinately silent."

CHAPTER XLIX.—A VISIT.

AND the months glided on. Winter came, and in its turn gave place to the promise of spring; that came, though, with its harsh eastern blasts that threatened to extinguish the frail lamp of life still burning opposite Richard's rooms.

He had responded to Fin's letter soon after its receipt, but he had heard no more. His attempts at ob-

taining an engagement had proved failures still; and so he had accepted his fate, and spent his time reading hard, his sole pleasures being a visit across the road, or a dinner with Frank Pratt.

Of the acts of the Rea family he knew little, save that they had wintered in Cornwall, from which a letter came occasionally from Humphrey or Mr. Mervyn, both sent to the care of Frank Pratt, Esq.; and in his, Humphrey had twice over expressed a wish to divide the property with his old companion.

"I don't see why you shouldn't do so," Pratt had said. "It's Quixotic not to accept his offer."

"*Aut Caesar, aut nullus*," was Richard's reply. "No, Franky, I'm too proud. I could never go to Cornwall again but as master. Those days are gone."

"But Dick, old man!"

"My dear Franky," said Richard, dropping something of the misanthropical bitterness that had come over him of late, "I am quite content as I am—content to wait; some of these days a chance will turn up. I'll abide my time."

"He's gone back to her," said Pratt, shaking his head. "Poor old Dick!—some people would misjudge him cruelly. Well, time will show."

Pratt was quite right, Richard had gone back to Netta; for it promised to be a fine afternoon, and on such days it had grown to be his custom to devote the few shillings he could spare from his scanty income to the payment of Sam Jenkles.

It was so this day. Sam was at the door by two, with the old horse brushed up, and every worn buckle shining. Then Richard would go upstairs, to find Netta with a bright spot in each cheek, and an eager welcome in her eye. She had gained ground during the autumn, but in the winter it had all been lost; and now the time had come when Richard raised her in his arms, and had to carry her—grown so light—down to the cab, wherein he tenderly placed her, and took her for one of the drives of which she was never weary.

It seemed a strange taste, but her desire was always for the same spot—the little wood where the fallen tree was lying. Here, on sunny days, she would sit for an hour, while he read to her; and then the quiet, slow journey was taken back, when the little ceremony had to be gone through in reverse, there was a grateful pressure of the hand, and Richard took his leave.

Twenty or thirty times was this little excursion made, and always with a foreboding on Richard's part that it was to be the last. But still she lingered, brightening with the balmy April weather that came by fits, and then fading again under the chilling blasts.

By some means Netta had informed herself of the return of the Rea family to town for the season, and she prepared to execute a little plan that had been long deferred. She had possessed herself of the note sent by Fin—the note which Richard had let fall. Probably Mrs. Jenkles was the bearer of her messages, and had obtained the information she required. Suffice it that Tiny Rea, now somewhat recovered, but still pale and dejected, received one morning a note, which she read, and then placed in her mother's hands.

It was as follows:—

"I have heard so often of your beauty, goodness, and your many acts of kindness, that I have been tempted to ask you to come once and see me before I pass

away. I would say *pray* come, but I think your gentle heart will listen to my simple appeal. Come to me, and say good-bye.

"NETTA LANE."

Here followed the address.

"It's some poor creature in great distress, my dear, who has heard of us. We'll go this afternoon, and take her something."

"Would you go, mamma?" faltered Tiny, whose heart told her who the letter was from.

"Certainly, my dear. I shouldn't rest to-night if I'd left such an appeal as that unanswered, let alone enjoy our At Home; though there isn't much enjoyment to be got out of those affairs, with everybody drinking tea on the stairs, and ten times as many people as we've room for."

"Then you would go, mamma?"

"Certainly, darling. It's an awkward time for her to send, but we'll go; and oh, my darling, pray, pray try and look bright. You make me wretched."

"I do—I will try, mamma!" exclaimed Tiny, suppressing a sob. "But tell me, is Captain Vanleigh going to be here to-night?"

"I—I was obliged to send him an invitation, my darling," said Lady Rea, pitifully. "Your papa stood at my side while I wrote it. If—if—he—Mr. Trevor had stood firm to you, they should have cut me in pieces before I'd have done it; but as it is, what can I do?"

Tiny made no reply; and directly after luncheon the carriage came round, and, being left at the corner of the narrow street, Lady Rea and her daughter made their way on foot to the house of Mrs. Jenkles.

Mrs. Lane met them, and said it was her daughter's wish to see Miss Rea alone, if she would condescend to go up and see her; and a minute after, with a mist flashing before her eyes, and a singing in her ears, Tiny stood near Netta's couch, as the poor girl lay, with clasped fingers, gazing up at the fashionably dressed, graceful girl.

Tiny maintained a haughty silence for a few minutes. This was the girl for whom she had been forsaken. She felt sure of it. How could it be otherwise? But the letter said that she was dying. Fin had told her of Pratt's assurances; and, as the mist cleared away, so melted the hauteur, for she could not look upon the soft, sweet face before her with anger; and if he loved her, should not she do the same?

The two girls gazed in each other's eyes for a few moments, and then, with a smile, Netta held out one hand.

"Thank you for coming," she said. "I have wanted to see you for months, and I was afraid I should not live long enough. Do you know why?"

"No—I cannot tell," said Tiny, in a choking voice; for she, too, could see for herself the truth of what had been said.

"I wanted to see the beautiful girl that he loves—her of whom he has so often talked—and to tell you that you have misjudged him, if you think as your sister thinks in the letter she sent."

"Letter?" exclaimed Tiny.

"Yes, this," said the girl, producing one from her bosom. "Oh, Miss Rea, how can you slight his noble love? If you only knew! You both misjudge him. Look at me, dear. I am here now; perhaps to-morrow,

or the next day, I shall be gone. But I do not think I could have died without seeing you face to face, and telling you that he has been true, and noble, and faithful to you. You might not have believed me if I had been different; but now, ready to go away, you know mine are true words, when I tell you Richard Lloyd has been to me as a brother."

"Oh, I believe, I believe!" sobbed Tiny, sinking on her knees beside the couch. "But it is too late—too late!"

"No, no," whispered Netta, "it is not too late. Make him happy. Send to him to come to you. He is too proud and poor to come himself. But I know his story: how he lost all through being so honourable and good. Tiny—you see I know your name; why, he has described you to me so often that I should have known *you*—send for him, and bless him. You could not love such a one as he too well."

"Too late!" sobbed Tiny. "It is too late."

She started up, and turned as if to go; but only to push her hair back from her forehead, lean over Netta's couch and kiss her, as a pair of thin, weak arms closed round her neck. Then, tearing herself away, she hurried from the house with Lady Rea, who vainly questioned her as to the cause of her agitation.

"I asked the woman, who is very ladylike, my dear, but she said her daughter would explain; so I waited till you came down; and now," said the little ruffled dame, "you do nothing but cry."

"Don't ask me now, mamma, dear," sobbed Tiny, covering her face with her hands. "Another time I'll tell you all."

"Very well, my darling," said Lady Rea, resignedly. "But, pray, try now and look brighter. Papa will be terribly put out if he finds you so; for he said you told him yesterday you would do as he wished about Captain Vanleigh, and Aunt Matty has been quite affectionate to me ever since."

"Mamma, dear, do you think it will make you happier?"

"I don't know, my dear," said Lady Rea. "I blame myself sometimes for not being more determined; but I'm obliged to own that Captain Vanleigh has been very patient, and he must care for you."

Tiny shuddered again, and her sobs became so violent that Lady Rea drew up the carriage window, for a few minutes being quite alarmed. At length, though, the poor girl grew calm, and seemed to make an effort over herself as they neared home, just as Fin crossed the road from the square garden, looking as innocent as if she had not had half an hour's talk with Frank Pratt.

CHAPTER L.

"AND what do you mean to do, Tiny?" said Fin, as she stood by her sister's side, dressed for the evening. "Papa told me about it, and nearly boxed my ears because I said it was a shame; and he ended by saying if I did not follow your example, and listen to Sir Felix, he would keep me on bread and water; and then I laughed out loud, and he left the room in a fury. How could you be so weak?"

"I don't know," faltered Tiny, "only that I was very miserable. Constant dripping will wear a stone."

"Then the stone must be very soft. Withdraw your promise," cried Fin. "Do as I do. I'll be as obedient

as a child as I can, but I will not be married against my will."

"Please, miss, somebody's downstairs already," said their maid, entering the room. "And Edward says Sir Hampton's in a towering passion because there was no one but him in the drawing-room."

"Isn't mamma there?" cried Fin.

"No, miss, her ladyship was dressed, and going down; but her primrose satin came undone—give way at the hooks and eyes—and she had to go back to change it."

"Tell Edward to say we'll be down in a moment," said Fin.

And hurrying the girl out of the room, she turned to Tiny, who stood looking pale and stunned.

"It wasn't true, Fin!" she said, pitifully, as her face began to work. "He wasn't deceitful. I saw her to-day."

"Saw whom?" exclaimed Fin, in wonder.

"That poor girl. She sent for me—she is dying; and oh, Fin, darling, I feel as if my heart would break!"

She sank sobbing on her sister's shoulder, sadly disarranging little Fin's dress; but that was forgotten as, with eager haste, the little maiden tried hard to soothe and comfort her.

"If ma won't fight for you, Tiny, I will," she cried, impetuously. "I declare it's too bad. I don't half know what you are talking about; but Frank—I mean Mr. Pratt, always sticks up for his friend. Ugh! I wish I'd been near when that wicked Mrs. Lloyd changed the babies, I'd have knocked her head off."

At this moment there was a knock at the bed-room door.

"Coming—coming—coming—coming!" said Fin, in a *crescendo*.

Then running to the door, she opened it once more to the maid.

"Please, miss—"

"Bother—bother—bother!" cried Fin. "Don't you see Miss Rea's poorly? Go and say we'll be down soon."

"But, please, miss, Sir Hampton sent Edward for me, and jumped on me horrid. He said it was my fault you weren't dressed, and your dear ma looks quite frightened with the people coming."

"Go and say we'll come down as soon as my sister's better—there!"

She half pushed the girl from the room, and then turned to Tiny.

"Now, look here, Tiny—you're very fond of that wicked Richard Trevor, bad as he's behaved to you."

Tiny gave her a pitiful look.

"Then I say, once for all, it would be a piece of horrible wickedness for you to let papa frighten you into this engagement. Now, tell me directly how it was. You ought to have told me yesterday. If you had been a good, wise sister, you would."

"Oh, Fin, I could not tell you!" said Tiny, plaintively. "You had just come in from the square, and looked so happy about—"

"I didn't—I wasn't—I hate him; and I won't listen to him any more till you are happy," burst out Fin.

Tiny smiled.

"Papa sent for me into his study, and took my hand, and sat down by me. He was so gentle and kind. He said he wanted to see us both settled in a position

which should give us the *entrée* into good society; for he said that, after all, he knew well enough people did not care for him, as he'd been a tradesman."

Fin gave her head a jerk.

"He told me he had given way about—about—"

"Yes, yes—go on—I know," said Fin.

"And that if he had not lost his position, he should never have opposed the match; but as that was all over, he begged me to consent to receive Captain Vanleigh's attentions. And oh, Fin, he knew about the attentions to that poor girl, and told me of it."

"Then some spiteful spy must have told him that," cried Fin. "Oh, Aunt Matty!"

"He talked to me for an hour, Fin, so kindly all the time—said it would be for the best, and that it would make him happy, and me too, he was sure; and at last I gave way. For oh, Fin, darling, I had no hope yesterday—nothing, I felt, to live for; and I thought that if I could make him satisfied, and dear ma happy, that was all I need care to do."

"Then you were a wicked, weak little coward," said Fin. "I'd have died sooner than given way. There, here they are again for us; and now I suppose we are to meet those people to-night."

"Yes; papa said he should write to Captain Vanleigh."

"And Sir Felix, of course. Madame, your humble servant—Finetta, Lady Landells. There, we're coming down now. Miss Rea is better," she said, in answer to a knock at the door.

Tiny turned to the glass, and smoothed her hair, while Fin went and stood behind her, holding her waist.

"What are you going to do?" she said, sharply.

Tiny shook her head.

"Masterly inactivity—that's the thing," cried Fin. "Do nothing; let things drift, same as I do. It can't go on, I'm sure it can't. There, let's go down, for poor, dear mamma's sake, and I'll be buffer all the evening."

Whenever Bluebeard comes near you, I'll get between, and we'll have a long talk to-morrow."

The two girls went down, to find many of the visitors arrived; and the news of Tiny's indisposition having spread, she was surrounded directly with kind inquirers. But she hardly heard a word that was said to her, for her timid eyes were wandering round the room, to see if the object of her dread had arrived; and then, noticing his absence, she sank back in a fauteuil with a sigh of relief.

Fin mounted guard by her side, and snubbed the down off the wings of several butterflies who came fluttering about them, her little lips tightening into a thin smile as Sir Felix and Vanleigh were announced.

Directly they had freed themselves from their host and hostess, they made their way to the corner of the great drawing-room, now ablaze with gas and candles, where the sisters were together; and, in spite of Fin's diplomacy, she found Vanleigh too much for her, as he quietly put aside her vicious little thrusts, and ended by interposing himself between her and Tiny—Fin being carried off by Sir Felix, whose face wore quite a puzzled expression, so verbally nettley was his little prize.

Aunt Matty met them, carrying with her a halo of lavender wherever she went, and exhaling the sad fragrance in every direction as she moved. Pepine was poorly in bed, so that his mistress was able to devote

the whole of her attention to those with whom she came in contact.

"Ah, Sir Felix!" she exclaimed, "and so you've captured my saucy little bird of a niece. You'll have to clip her wings some day," she continued, playfully.

And as she spoke she tapped Fin on each shoulder—from whence the imaginary wings doubtless sprang—with her fan, while aunt and niece gazed in each other's eyes.

"Yes, exactly," said Sir Felix, smiling feebly.

But somehow he did not feel comfortable, and in spite of his after-efforts to lead Fin into conversation, he failed.

The end of it was that the little maid telegraphed to another admirer, and got herself carried back to where she had left her sister; but Tiny was gone.

In fact, as soon as they were left alone, Vanleigh had quietly offered his arm.

"This room is too hot for you, Valentina," he said.

"Let me take you out of the crowd."

Masterly inactivity," Fin had said, and the words seemed to ring in Tiny's ears, as, unable to refuse, she suffered herself to be led through the crowded rooms, past Lady Rea, who nodded and smiled—past Aunt Matty, who came up, tapped the captain on the middle shirt stud with her fan, and pinched her niece's cheek, as she smiled at her like a wintry apple—past Sir Hampton, who came behind her, and whispered, after a faint "Er-rum," "Thank you, Tiny, good girl!"—out on to the great broad staircase, now a perfect conservatory of exotics, where the air was perfectly cool by comparison; and there he found her a seat, smiling occasionally at the new-comers who kept thronging upstairs to where Lady Rea was receiving—Sir Hampton now keeping an eye upon the couple, a flight of stairs below him, and nodding encouragement whenever his eyes met those of his child.

"I received Sir Hampton's note yesterday," said Vanleigh at last, speaking slowly, and in a suppressed voice, as the guests passed on. "Don't start—I am not going to make a scene. I only wish to tell you how happy you have made me, and that you shall find me patient and watchful of your every wish."

"Masterly inactivity," thought Tiny.

"I am going to wait—to let you see that heretofore you have misjudged me. And now let me assure you that I am not going to presume upon the consent I have received."

He waited, and she felt obliged to speak.

"Captain Vanleigh," faltered Tiny, "it was at my father's wish that I gave way, and consented to receive your visits. It is only fair to you to tell you that you are seeking to gain one who does not—who can never care for you."

"My dear Valentina," he said, smiling, "I am quite content. I know your sweet, gentle nature better than you know it yourself. And now for once, and once only, I am going to revert to an unpleasant theme, begging you first to forgive me for touching a wound that I know still throbs."

"Captain Vanleigh!"

"It is odd, is it not," he said, speaking with a mingling of profound tenderness and respect—"this talking of such things in a crowd? I only wished to say this once, that you do not know me. I am going to prove my love by patience. Valentina, dearest, you have

been wasting the sweetness of your heart on an unworthy object."

She tried to rise; but his hand rested on her arm, and detained her.

"I pain you; but I must tell you, sweet one, that he whom you cared for no sooner left your side than he sought consolation with another, forsaking a love that is meet for the best on earth—a love of which I feel myself unworthy. Stay, not a syllable. Those were cruel words, but the words of truth. Now we understand one another, let us draw a veil over the past, never to refer to it again. You will know me better soon."

As he spoke, there was a little bustle in the hall, where visitors were constantly arriving; and as Vanleigh stood gazing down in the pale, frightened face before him, watching the struggle that was going on, a plainly dressed woman brushed by the servant, who tried to stay her, and reached the stairs.

"Forgive me, Valentina," whispered Vanleigh, bending over her. "I touched the wound but to try and heal it. My future life shall be all devotion; and in the happiness to come you will—"

Tiny half rose; and he was about offering his arm to conduct her back to the drawing-room, when a voice below arrested him.

"Don't stop me! I must see him. I know he is here."

"But you can't, you know. Here, Edward!"

It was one of the servants who called, but he was too late; the strange visitor had already reached the landing as Sir Hampton hurried down, aghast at such a daring interruption.

At that moment the woman uttered a cry of joy, and darted towards where Vanleigh stood with his companion.

"Oh, Arthur!" she cried, "they would not bring a message. I was obliged to force my way in."

"Who is this madwoman?" cried Vanleigh, turning of a waxy pallor, while Tiny clung to the balustrade for support.

"Yes; mad—almost!" cried the woman, with a piteous cry. "But come—come at once! She is praying to see you once more. Arthur, Arthur," she panted, sinking at his knees, and clasping them, "for God's sake, come—our darling is on the point of death!"

"Who is this woman? Er-rum—Edward—James!" cried Sir Hampton, "where are the police?"

"Don't touch me!" cried the unwelcome visitor, starting to her feet; and her words came panting from her breast. "Quick, Arthur, or it's too late! Sir," she cried, turning to Sir Hampton, whose hand was on her arm, "I am Captain Vanleigh's wife!"

Life-saving at Sea.

MR. GEORGE FREDERICK PARRATT has received a medal from the Maritime Exhibition, held in Paris last year, for his invention for improvements in life-rafts. The principle of Mr. Parratt's invention is well known. It is, in fact, a tubular lifeboat with three keels. The central cylinder is composed of metal, for the stowage of provisions, signals, and gear. The outside cylinders are made of cork shavings, cemented together with india-rubber, covering wire-

frames, which, with patent outside cases, make buoyant and flexible outriggers, capable of sustaining the force of concussion against the side of a ship without injury. The main feature of the raft is the small place it occupies when folded up; it can be compressed into a deck-seat of $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 ft. wide. When expanded, the raft has a beam of 9 or 12 ft., according to its length. In addition to the buoyancy of the three permanent cylinders or floats, considerable flotation power is obtained by the inflation of flexible bags within the sides of the raft, as well as by the inflation of flexible cylinders, which complete the deck on either side of the metal cylinder. In consequence of recent events having shown how suddenly a ship sinks after collision with another vessel, or from running on a rock during thick weather, Mr. Parratt has devoted his attention to the launching of the life-raft as rapidly as possible. This object has been effected by a very simple plan. The stretchers are divided, and swing on central pivots; when, therefore, the weight of the raft is suspended from the davits, the folding stretchers are straightened, and remain fixed in that position by means of self-acting spring locks as the raft falls on the water. The operation, therefore, of expanding the raft does not occupy many seconds, and in this condition it will keep above water quite as many persons as a boat of the same length would hold, with the capacity of being inflated afterwards up to three times the buoyancy of the boat. The raft possesses qualities which a boat does not—viz., that of the impossibility of its capsizing or sinking under any circumstances. The recent loss of many lives by the wrecks of the *Deutschland* and *Strathclyde* has proved beyond all doubt how utterly useless boats are in case of disaster at sea. The adoption of an insubmersible apparatus has therefore become an absolute necessity on board all passenger vessels. A raft of 18 ft. long by 2 ft. 6 in. wide (when closed up as a deck seat) has a beam of 7 ft. when expanded, and will carry the weight of fifty persons. Three rafts will only occupy the area of the long-boat, and they will carry six times the number of people. The raft can be adapted in three different ways, either as a lifeboat hanging from the davits, as a deck seat, or as a cover for the long-boat. The long-boat must now be carried keel downwards by order of the Board of Trade, and must, of course, have a cover. The cost of the raft is about £1 a head, calculating the number of persons to be provided for; but a company has been formed for the purpose of letting out these rafts on hire by the voyage, or by the year, so that the shipowners will incur a very moderate expense by the adoption of Mr. Parratt's invention, which might be repaid by a small fee from each passenger.

ANTI-PROVERBIAL.—Many proverbs admit of contradiction, as witness the following:—"The more the merrier." Not so—one hand is enough in a purse. "Nothing but what has an end." Not so—a ring has none, for it is round. "Money is a great comfort." Not when it brings a thief to the gallows. "The world is a long journey." Not so—the sun goes over it in a day. "It is a great way to the bottom of the sea." Not so—it is but a stone's cast. "A friend is best found in adversity." Not so—for then there is none to be found. "The pride of the rich makes the labour of the poor." Not so—the labour of the poor makes the pride of the rich.

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER XIII.—A DISTINGUISHED GUEST.

IT is by no means essential to vanity that there should be anything to be vain of. Ugly people are vain of their looks, and fools not infrequently pride themselves on their talents. And it is to be observed that artists make their money, not so much by painting the young and attractive, as by perpetuating the likenesses of those whose youth is a memory, and who are, in themselves, only interesting as antiques.

Bearing this in mind, it is easy to understand how it was that old Miss Effra Knowles fell readily into the trap, when an eminent artist—an R.A.—delicately hinted that it would be a pleasure and a privilege to paint her portrait, and how she persuaded herself that she owed it to her family to expend a hundred guineas in securing for them a work of art of such an interesting character. She would have preferred sitting to a foreign artist, it being her fixed conviction that English art was like everything else English, of an absurdly inferior character; but as the R.A. in question was patronized by the Court, and charged twice as much as any artist not patronized by the Court, she consented to waive her scruples, and to give him the necessary sittings.

The artist lived in a big house at the West-end. He kept a servant in livery, and a page in buttons. His reception rooms were palatial, and his studio was the exact copy of a famous studio in Rome. So there could be no doubt as to this artist being a very great artist indeed, or as to its being quite the proper thing to sit to him.

This Aunt Effra did twice a week.

She found it—not unnaturally—rather a bore; but persevered, and was rewarded in due time by a sight of herself looking from a canvas in all her maiden loveliness.

There she sat, in a languishing attitude, and a ruby velvet dress, with quite a superior lustre on her false hair, and a sweet simper which gave a slight glimpse of her false teeth; with her eyes swimming in liquid lustre, and the lines of her face smoothed out into dimples, meeting in the roseate softness of a complexion absolutely infantile. And there were all her diamonds in full blaze—the earrings, and the necklace, and the girdle, and the rest of it, while a hand grasping a fan was studded with rings, so numerous that it had to be on the sprawl over her heaving bosom, in order to make room for them all. All the accessories of the picture were of the richest description, to intimate that the lady had plenty of money, and moved in the very best society; and the artist had, by a crowning touch, introduced the family arms—as borne by Sir Courcy Knowles de Knowles at Agincourt, on a vase holding a rose.

All this was very gratifying, and showed that the R.A. quite understood his business. The lady was of course delighted, and on the day fixed for the finishing touch to be given to the work, finding Eva indisposed to accompany her, even ventured to the artist's alone.

Of course, on presenting herself, the servant in livery informed her that the artist was engaged. He always was engaged, this clever artist, and envious

people said he had made his position entirely by keeping people waiting. He, it was alleged, used to do it on purpose—sometimes reading through the morning papers, while half a dozen sitters yawned in his reception rooms—well knowing that if he appeared to be doing nothing he should soon have nothing to do. For who would believe in an artist, doctor, dentist, or lawyer who wasn't run after and worried to death?

"The R.A. was engaged," said the servant. "Would her ladyship please to wait?"

(He addressed her as her ladyship, to show that most of those to whom he answered the door were entitled to be so addressed, and she did not seem at all displeased, or disposed to correct the mistake.)

Consenting to wait, she was shown into one of the gorgeous rooms devoted to waiting, and left to amuse herself as best she might.

There was plenty to beguile the time. There was a superb looking-glass, always an amusement in itself. There were pictures and statues (decorous statues sufficiently far after the antique to be decent), and the tables were covered with picture books in wonderful bindings—as a rule, more binding than book.

In this pleasant retreat, Aunt Effra, having first assured herself by a long stare at the glass that her hair was all on, and her complexion all right, and her lips up to colour, took a seat near the fire, and prepared to make herself comfortable.

A long time passed—an hour perhaps, or well on for two hours; and bending over a book which she held on her knees, the lady began to doze (art has this curious effect on some people, especially if it is particularly high), when she was suddenly startled by an exclamation and a footstep in the room.

Starting up, she let the book fall.

"A thousand pardons," cried a mellifluous voice with a slight foreign accent; "I was not aware that your ladyship was in this room."

As the words were uttered, the speaker advanced, and with the most graceful bow in the world, stooped, picked up the fallen book, and presented it to the astonished damsel.

"Thanks. Dear me! how excessively absurd! Your pardon, I'm sure I—well, really—"

In these broken phrases Aunt Effra expressed her mingled surprise and agitation, and found time to bring her gold eye-glass round her waist, and raise it with a nervous hand, so that she might have a good look at the polite intruder.

It was not the artist, as she had supposed at first. It was a man of striking appearance, with a fine face, and an eye like that of a hawk. Black hair, slightly grizzled, fell in profusion over his shoulders, and his beard was long and ample. He wore a velvet coat, frogged and braided, and held in one long, lithe hand a felt hat with a sugar-loaf crown. His age might have been forty, perhaps fifty. Though he had spoken in English, there was a foreign air about him in keeping with the accent, observable in his pronunciation.

As he stood, his sallow cheeks wrinkled, and disclosed a set of perfectly white teeth.

"I am more than distressed at having startled her ladyship," he said; "I shall not forgive myself. Never!"

"Oh, but it is of no consequence," was the reply. "I am afraid I must have forgotten myself—I must

positively have dreamed. Quite ridiculous! But waiting tires one so much."

"And is it possible you have been kept waiting?"

"Oh, yes, an hour—two hours."

The stranger raised his eyes and clasped his hands, expressing in pantomime his horror at the bare idea. A lady—such a lady!—kept waiting! He was prostrated; he was desolate. Words could not have added to the forcible expression of the agonizing feelings which ravaged his mind.

"Monsieur is clearly insensible to the privilege he enjoys in being permitted to transfer those features, that form, to canvas!" he exclaimed, as soon as he had recovered his emotion.

The lady blushed.

She could blush. The bloom on her cheek was transparent—a mere wash.

"You are too good, too flattering," she said; "but there, you come from the Continent, where—"

"Where the language of compliment is unknown."

"What! While you are so polite?"

"Ah, my lady," he responded, laying his hand on his heart, "in my case, politeness is forced from me. We Italians do not compliment; but we appreciate beauty, and admiration from our lips is the language of truth. I speak the English but ill, and cannot express to you the feelings with which I am inspired. But pardon, I am intruding."

"Oh, no, no—not at all!"

Had one of her own countrymen, a perfect stranger, ventured to say so much, to flatter her so clumsily and openly, she would have resented it as a gross insult; but those delightful foreigners, with their insolence so adroitly veiled under an affectation of overpowering feelings, who could resist them? Not Aunt Effra, with her predilections in favour of everything continental. Besides, the stranger was so handsome, so romantic! A nobleman, at least, she had already decided; perhaps a prince—who could tell?

"Since I am pardoned so far," he said, with a winning smile, "might I myself overwhelm with felicity by conveying to monsieur, the artist, that he is detaining the lady who has condescended to honour him with this sitting?"

"Thanks; I should be so glad," was the answer. "But, tell me, you have been long in England?"

"No; a few years only."

"Ah! I am not surprised. A dreadful hole of a place, and the people, oh, so excessively stupid!"

"You measure them by your own wit, your own brilliance, by the spirit which irradiates your own beauty and makes it irresistible. No wonder you fail to do justice to your countrymen—"

"And women. Oh, they're all alike. Not a straw to choose between them."

The foreign gentleman shrugged his shoulders, expressing at once concurrence and sympathy.

"You have travelled much?" he asked.

"Not greatly."

"In France?"

"Oh, yes."

"Italy?"

"A—well, yes—a little."

"My country is proud. A humble exile from it, I thank you."

"You are vastly polite," replied Aunt Effra, delighted

with the compliment; "and now may I ask you, are you really an exile? Have you brought yourself to quit the land of vines and sunshine for this detestable island of fogs and bronchial affections?"

"Alas!" he replied, with a delicious tremor in the voice, "I had no choice. I could but follow the divine mistress of my heart."

"Oh, indeed!"

She iced the words a little—"mistress" was such an equivocal term. Those black, piercing eyes of his, which read everything with a glance, read this.

"You mistake," he exclaimed; "if I spoke of love, it was of the passion which inflames the heart of every true son of Italy. Liberty is the divinity we serve; for her sake I risked all and lost all; for her sake I am an exile on this foreign shore."

"I see, I see," returned Aunt Effra, quickly—"a mere question of politics. How shocking! And I dare say you sacrificed position and lost money in the sacred cause?"

"Both—both; my palace is a ruin; those I loved and cherished, where are they? The rank which was my birthright—what remains of it to me? I am a wreck, a wail, an outcast on the world."

He raised the sleeve of his velvet coat, and drew it across his eyes. Had tears glittered on his eyelids, the action could not have been more effective.

"But you have the solace of affection—you—your—"

There was a question—a vital question—hovering on those virgin lips, but they did not exactly know how to give shape to it.

The stranger penetrated the nature of the question.

"I am alone!" he cried, smiting his manly breast with his clenched fist twice—"alone, alone!"

"You have no wife?"

"Ah, no, no."

She was glad of that; but her face did not express gladness—only commiseration.

"No children?"

"Madame!"

It was hard to say whether the tone in which he uttered this word implied that the suggestion was offensive, or that it awoke painful memories. And Aunt Effra began to feel that she had asked a compromising question; but was immediately relieved by the tact of her companion, who, in a sad, tearful voice, added—

"To the exile it is permitted to have no ties of kindred or affection. He is alone."

"How dreadful!" exclaimed the lady, who had herself had a life-long experience of single blessedness, and didn't like it. "How distressing! I feel for you more than I can express—I do, indeed!"

It was natural that the exile should feel touched and overcome by this expression of sympathy in one so fair, and it was also the most natural thing in the world that the Italian's impulsive nature should prompt him to give expression to his feelings in a manner according with the custom of his country. Dropping on one knee, on a footstool, he seized the white hand of the sympathiser, and, raising it to his lips, impressed a sufficiently impassioned kiss upon a ruby as big as a nut which formed the centre of one of the lady's many rings.

It was while he was in the act of showing his gratitude in this demonstrative manner that the door abruptly opened—all the doors in this house turned softly

on their hinges—and some one entering uttered an exclamation of mingled indignation and surprise.

"Marco!"

That was the one word made use of.

The Italian sprang to his feet, and confronted the speaker. It was the artist, the famous R.A., who had entered, and now stood glowering at the other. The situation was an awkward one; but this artist was clever out of his studio as well as in it, and he immediately bridged over the difficulty his abrupt exclamation had created.

"That is the pose!" he cried, advancing towards the lady with extended hands. "Don't move. That is it exactly! I see you have been availing yourself of Marco's artistic taste in getting a position. Thanks, Marco, but we won't trouble you any longer. Good day!"

He turned towards the Italian, and fairly walked him towards the door, his face black with rage; but adroit as he was, Marco was not to be crushed, and stepping aside before quitting the apartment, he made the lady a bow, into which he threw all imaginable suppleness and grace. It was graciously acknowledged; and having assured himself of this, he vanished.

The sitting lasted three hours.

At its close Miss Knowles's brougham was announced, and she ordered the coachman to drive "home." On the way she gave herself up to a reverie, in which the handsome exile occupied a prominent place, both for his own sake, and on account of the compromising scene in which he had played a part. What she could not understand was, why the artist should have addressed him so abruptly, with an utter want of respect, and why Marco should have suffered himself to be so rudely expelled.

She was revolving this point in her mind as the brougham passed Hyde Park Corner, when, happening to look out, to her amazement she saw the very individual who was occupying her thoughts.

Yes; there stood Marco, conversing earnestly with a young girl, not more than sixteen, with the bluest of blue eyes, and long flaxen tails hanging down her back. They were too much engaged to notice the brougham or its occupant as it dashed past them, and, of course, Aunt Effra did not stop. Even if maidenly modesty had permitted such a step, she was too much hurt, too angry, too mortified to have taken it.

It could hardly be that the damsel was in love? Yet she was assuredly suffering the pangs of jealousy!

HERE is a new version of an old piece of versification:—

POLLY LOVES ME!—RONDEAU.

Polly loves me! now I know
What it is makes life worth living!
All its joys to her I owe,
Joys that she delights in giving.
And if fate from fortune's way,
Jealous of my triumph, shoves me,
What care I while I can say,
Polly loves me?

A RUNAWAY thief having applied to a blacksmith for work, the latter showed him some handcuffs, and asked if he understood such kind of work. "Why, yes," said the other, "I guess I've had a hand in 'em afore."

A London Suburb.

WE should think there are but few persons whose lives are passed in our great city but are acquainted with the truly charming scenery abounding round its northern suburbs, and the number is undoubtedly becoming less now that an additional attraction exerts its influence in the Alexandra Palace, Muswell Hill. Who does not know Highgate and its viaduct, crossing what is now known as the Archway-road?

To those of our readers who have stood on the aforesaid viaduct and enjoyed the expansive view of London, with the dome of St. Paul's rising out of the mist—or shall we say smoke?—as well as to those who have that treat in prospect, a little chit-chat anent Highgate and its Archway may prove of interest. As far back as the time of Richard Cœur de Lion, Highgate was but a little hamlet; but by the coachmen, and more particularly by the horses, journeying from London it was looked upon even then with pardonable aversion, in consequence of its steep hill. As London increased in importance and its trade developed, the traffic also increased to a vast extent, rendering the roads impassable at times, more especially in wet weather, the upsetting of a waggon or coach with its load of passengers being of common occurrence.

John Bull was, however, then as now, slow to move in the matter of improvements, and it was not until the fourteenth century that the Bishop of London allowed a highway to be cut through his park and woods of Haringhay—the *hare-inge-hagh*, or meadow of hares—now condensed into Hornsey. This was a great boon, but the Lord Bishop was fond of the loaves and fishes, for he stipulated that every one using the road should pay a toll, and to enforce payment caused a toll-gate to be erected. "This gate was hung on a stout-built archway, abutting on one hand on an old chapel wall, and on the other on the gatekeeper's house, so that there was no escaping it. This originated, it is said, the name of the place—Highgate." Although as far back as 1786 it was proposed to improve the highway to London by avoiding the hill, and cutting a road through Caen Wood, it was not till the present century that "the powers that be" could be aroused from their lethargy, and then the Archway Company obtained their charter, by act of Parliament, to construct a road, avoiding the steep hill by which Highgate is entered on the north, east, and west, and leaving the village on the south-west. The first idea—a tunnel—was commenced, but from the lack of engineering skill the project may truly be said to have fallen to the ground, as on one Sunday morning the tunnel caved in, falling with a tremendous crash, shaking all the houses in the neighbourhood. Like many similar accidents, this catastrophe, had it occurred later in the day, would have resulted in a great loss of life, as the tunnelling operations were one of the sights for the holiday folks, numbers flocking day by day to see their progress.

In consequence of this accident, the tunnel idea was abandoned, the formation of a road by an open cutting being substituted, which in due course became *un fait accompli*; this, however, necessitated the erection of the present viaduct, from the designs of one Robert Vazie, an engineer of no mean abilities. For the use of this road a penny toll was instituted, which was

paid willingly in consideration of the immense boon afforded; but within the last few weeks this toll has been abolished, to the no small satisfaction of travellers, and to the thousands that frequent Highgate on the seventh day of the week. A well-known writer on the antiquities of the neighbourhood mentions that "a variety of curious fossils were discovered during the progress of excavating, amongst them fossil teeth, commonly called sharks' teeth, sometimes sword-fish teeth, but unlike either; petrified fish; nuts resembling the palm nut; a great variety of shells; nautili much larger than those generally found in a fossil state; petrified wood, very abundant; and a peculiar resinous substance not yet described by any naturalist, resembling amber."

Queer Cards.

CHAPTER VII.—BILL HAWKER TO THE RESCUE.

"MISS ROSE held me by both hands, and led me to her children, for me to kiss the little dears; and Jack Harnet, he took off his tarpaulin hat, and said—

"If so be we might all be allowed that liberty, it might be none the worse for us."

"And all the men kissed 'em, and then we went out on the balcony, each with a loaded pistol in one hand and a cudgel under his arm.

"The niggers had come up near to the house, with their torches flaring; but they were yet too far off to see us as we crouched down.

"I was the first to drop over on to the ground; then came Jack Harnet and the others; and we all went on our hands and knees, and crawled round by the hedge till we got close to the fellows that had the torches. Then we struck off under a thicket of garden shrub, and got astern of 'em as quiet as cats.

"We only just got breath when they came together, jabbering like a parcel of wild baboons—about thirty of 'em, with knives and swords brandishing about. That was what we wanted; and, before they had time to look about 'em, we made a rush, and fired our pistols into the thick of 'em.

"It was sharp work, and it was well for Jack Harnet that I'd learnt singlestick; for I just caught a nigger on the wrist as he'd brought his cutlass to bear on Jack's skull; but I had one thing to do, and that was to come up with the white man.

"He'd snatched a torch from the ground, and was off towards the house before I could catch him; but I ran with all my might, and though he had his wind, I'd light sailor's pumps on, and gained upon him fast.

"He thought I was further off than I was, for he turned round suddenly, and snatched a long pistol from his breast; but I was already upon him, and caught him inside the elbow—a spent blow, but just enough to make him miss me.

"How his cutlass did hack and slice my cudgel, to be sure!—it's a blessing the wood's so hard in the West Indies, or I should never have met the present company. But his weapon was blunt, and he used it awkward like; so that at last I made a feint, and before he could recover his guard, I brought down that cudgel upon his skull with a blow that might have been heard in the house.

"I had no time to turn round before I heard the

galloping of horses' feet, and then the howling of the niggers, as eight mounted men, with drawn sabres, charged amongst them, and drove them down. Jack Harnet had one of his hands bitten, and another of my friends was wounded—just a scalp wound, but nothing to speak of.

"When the horsemen came up to where my enemy was lying for dead, one of 'em looked at him by the light of one of the torches that was thrown down, and he says to his companion—

"Why, this is Hellaby, you know; the man that kept the little hell in the town where we lost so infernally."

"There's something in this," says the other; 'let's take him up to the house, and the two men will bring the blacks on.'

"I beg your pardon, your honour," says I, 'but as this man belongs to me, and I and my friends of her Majesty's ship *Basilisk* have had to stand against the lot, I'd rather, if it's the same to you, take him up myself.'

"So Jack Harnet and the men makes a sort of stretcher out of branches, and we lays him upon this, and carries him up gently to the house-shed, and puts him by till there's a bed got ready.

"Well, we went back again; and when Miss Rose saw us all walking to the front, and the two gentlemen leading their horses, she fell on her knees and clasped both little ones in her arms, while her husband came out, and took each one of us by the hand in turn, crying like a child.

"I was a-crying myself to know that I'd been so blest as to have helped to save their lives that night; and I felt as though I'd begun to find out what the meaning of the message was that my young mistress had sent to me years before; for I went in to look for Mr. Feene.

"There he was, still lying on his bed, not insensible, but rolling his head from one side to the other, and going fast; for he was an old man, and the wound had been too much for his hot-blooded temper.

"He was quite rational now and then, and when I went in he made an offer to take my hand; and I sat down by the side of the bed. All day he was asking for me, I heard; and when we'd had a turn in for an hour, I went to Jack Harnet, and told him and the others to go on board and say how things had come about, and that I was still there, waiting for Captain Styles—for I couldn't budge, for fear of a court-martial.

"Well, I had the white man put into a room away from the house, and what with him and Mr. Feene I was a regular nurse—neither of them being fit to be trusted by themselves, and while the big nigger took one, I took the other; for though, of course, there were women in the house, they were all niggers, and consequently couldn't have anything beat into their woolly heads while all the excitement of securing the prisoners was going on.

"When the doctor arrived from Kingston, there was very little hope of either of the wounded men; and, at daybreak, as I was sitting beside Hellaby, and giving him some drink, I heard a low tap at the door, and when I went out, there was Miss Rose, standing as pale as a sheet, and her eyes red and all puffed up with crying.

"Gone?" I said.

"Yes, gone, William," she answered—'gone; but he

knew who it was who tried to save him, for I told him yesterday. He told me to ask you still one favour more, and said you would do it for my sake—to find my brother, if ever you go to England, and he is alive.

"I never knew she had a brother, for the cook had told me she was an only child; but I hadn't time to ask questions, for the dying man was calling for more drink. So I took my mistress's hand, and I said—

"Anything that is possible for me to do, I'll do with all the life that's in me."

"Well, I hadn't long to wait before I heard all about it, for the wounded man Hellaby got clearer in his head before he died; and as I was sitting there in the great empty room, at night, with the moon shining clear through the windows, and the lamp looking red beside the white light—as I was sitting there, I felt his hand come out of the bedclothes and clutch hold of my arm, gripping it tight.

"I thought he was delirious, but I said nothing.

"Are you the man—the man that killed me?" says he, quite softly.

"You're not dead yet," I said; "and more than that, what I did wouldn't have killed a man that hadn't been killing himself for years before."

"For, you see, the crack on the head wouldn't have done so much harm but for the state of his blood, through drink bringing on inflammation.

"No, I know that," he says, sitting right up in the bed; "but you're the man that killed me, arn't you?"

"Well, if you die, I am," said I.

"He stops, and draws a deep breath; and then he says, pointing to the door—

"Is he dead?"

"Mr. Feene," said I, "died this morning."

"A sort of awful convulsive grin came over his face, and he waved his hand round in the air above his head. Then he crouched down among the bedclothes, and groaned as though he was in pain.

"Presently he started up again—

"Give me some drink," he said, "and listen."

FERN LIFE IN DEVONSHIRE.—"The railway—to the lover of nature—mars the free, wild aspect of the woods and fields. But nature conquers everywhere in Devonshire. Even its iron-lined roads are subdued by the softening influence of plants and shrubs. The ferns especially resent the intrusion of the railway engineers. Dry, hard, bare cuttings may be made through the hills; the turf, heather, and wild bracken may be stripped off along the valleys; the lines may be laid down, and everything done to make the scene look as commercial and uninteresting as possible. But the spontaneous influences which produce vegetable life will overcome all this. The rain comes down, and on to the softened earth the grass seeds blow. Thistle and dandelion will send their germs in light and airy chariots; and fern spores in countless numbers will find their way where the navvy has ruthlessly stripped off the verdant carpeting to make room for the iron roads. Nature, indeed, everywhere more or less asserts her sway, and clothes our roads and railways with her charming dress; but it is especially the ferns with which roads and railways have to contend in the charming county of Devon—the ferns which carry everywhere a soft and indescribable grace."—*The Fern Paradise*. By Francis George Heath.

Changes in Turkey.

ON the morning of May 30th, at seven o'clock, Constantinople was awakened by the firing of cannon. Each ironclad in the harbour fired a hundred and one guns. Murad Effendi was ushered in as the new Sultan, and all Abdul Aziz's long-laid schemes for the succession of his son fell to the ground. The chief ministers waited upon the ex-Sultan at his palace at Dolma Baghtche, and urged upon him the demands of the Softas. How they were received may be imagined when it is stated that immediately after they took the necessary steps to compel him to abdicate.

The palace was surrounded. It faces the Bosphorus, and the seaward terrace was occupied suddenly by sailors from the fleet, the Sultan's pet toy, which for six months in every year has been anchored in front of his palace windows. At the same time, soldiers surrounded the building on the landward side.

The Sultan was taken on board an ironclad, and sent to Top Capon, having previously been forced to abdicate. Earlier in the day, the Minister of Foreign Affairs had an audience with the ambassadors, and in the evening, immediately after the abdication, called on them again.

The excitement in Constantinople was immense. The first fear on hearing the cannon was that a hostile fleet had arrived. When, however, the heralds rushed about proclaiming Murad as new Sultan, the anxiety changed into delight. Greeks and Turks kissed each other in the streets, and everywhere there was mutual congratulation. The men-of-war in the harbour were decorated with flags, and everywhere there was rejoicing. At ten a.m. another salute was fired to indicate that Murad was on his way to the Mosque of Ayoub, to be girt with the sacred sword of Osman. Everywhere he was well received. The streets were filled with men shouting "Long life to Murad!"

Murad is the son of Sultan Abdul Medjid. He has been kept a strict prisoner in the palace of the late reigning Sultan for some years; and now reigns in his stead, under the name of Murad V.

The new Sultan is in the thirty-sixth year of his age, and has hitherto lived in such complete seclusion that but little is known of him. It is ascertained, however, that he has a knowledge of French, and, as he has an English wife, it is probable that he speaks English. He is said by some to have inherited the failing which brought his father to an early grave; but this may be an invention of those who, with a view to flatter the late Sultan, have always sought to exalt Yussuf Izzeddin, and depreciate Murad.

The great reform to which the Softas are now turning their attention is the limitation of the power of the Sultan. In this, of course, they will have the entire sympathy of all classes. This is, in fact, the only effectual reform. Every other is illusory so long as the best devised plans of home and foreign statesmen can be set at naught by the arbitrary will of the sovereign.

The Turks now openly charge the late Sultan with being the cause of the national distress. They speak of his extravagance, and believe that he had an enormous deposit of gold in his palace at Beshiktash. But the favourite charge which is now brought against him by the Softas is that he oppressed his people, and forfeited his right to the throne by extort-

ing money from them. According to these Moslem casuists, the duty of the sovereign is not to take from his subjects, but to receive what they give him; and they are now appealing to the Koran to show that there is divine authority for the removal of a prince who takes instead of receives.

The Softas, and the ordinary Turk who takes his teaching from the Softas, are clearly of opinion that the Koran is with them in what they are doing. Their talk on the subject is like what one would have heard probably from an Independent trooper under Cromwell. The Koran is even more to them than the Bible was to the Puritan or Independent, for it is their code of law and of political science. They are reformers in the etymological sense of the word, and in a great variety of ways are proposing to return to the old paths. Their latest discovery—one which is spoken about quite openly among the Turks—is that it is lawful to get rid of an incompetent or bad sovereign. The ordinary expedient for the attainment of this object is a *fetva* signed by the Sheikh-ul-Islam, the Grand Vizier, and the Minister of War. Upon the signature of such a document any man is believed to be authorized to assassinate the Sultan.

And now, either by suicide or assassination, Abdul Aziz has passed away. That he feared being slain was evident from the fact that for weeks the Sultan had been particularly careful not to eat or drink anything which might be poisoned, and the ordinary rumour was that his diet was almost exclusively one of hard-boiled eggs.

The first of the Ottoman sovereigns that came to a bad end was Amurath, second in succession from the founder, and first of the name borne by the present Sultan; for Murad or Mourad is only a more correct form of the word, which to Shakespeare and to most English readers was better known as Amurath. This prince it was against whom a crusade was preached by the Pope Urban V., and against whom, at the Pope's command, were leagued together the Kings of Hungary, Bosnia, and Servia, and the Prince of Wallachia. The Christians were beaten, but a noble Serbian in the service of King Lazarus found an opportunity, when led as a captive to the feet of Amurath, to stab the victorious Sultan to the heart. The Turk, equal in desperate courage to his assassin, was able to retain his seat on the throne till his guards had executed both the King and the noble, and then expired without a word. His successor, Bajazet, the deserving subject of many tragedies, and one of the stock examples of extreme good and bad fortune, was first the conqueror of Asia and then the captive of Timour, and finally expiated in the famous iron cage his earlier successes and glories. Thus far the Sultans had escaped internal conspiracies; but Amurath, second of that ill-boding name, was twice deposed by his war ministers and twice restored to power, dying just before the Turkish arms triumphed over the defences of Constantinople.

The second Bajazet—another ill-omened name—was even more unlucky than the second Amurath. His own youngest son, Selim, organized a conspiracy, and the father was not only deposed, but barbarously murdered by his command. So instructive an example could not be lost upon the royal family, and it became usual to institute massacres in the Imperial palace at almost every new accession. Thus Mohammed III. strangled

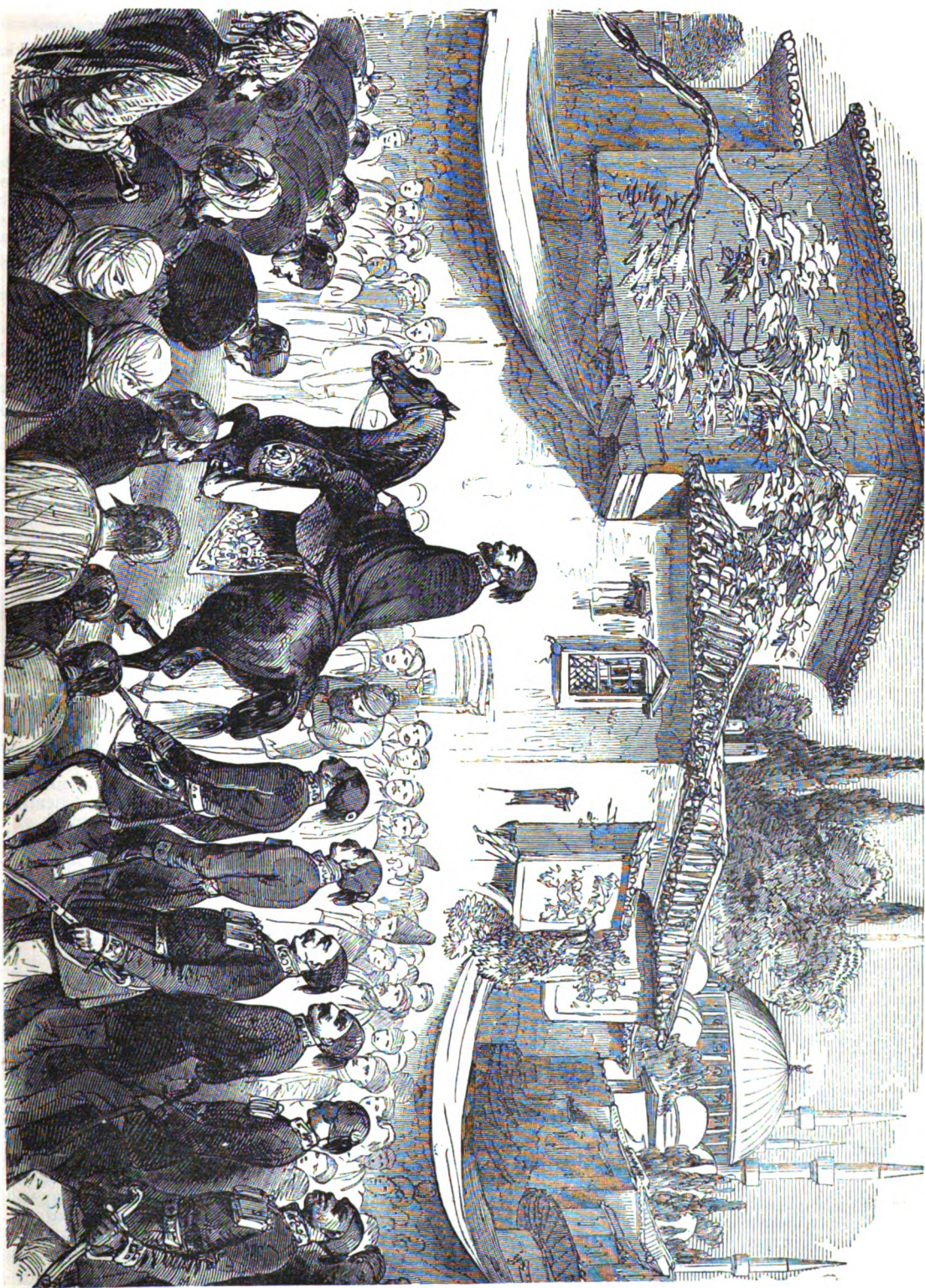
his nineteen brothers, and threw into the Bosphorus, safely sewed up in the well-known sack, a dozen of his stepmothers.

From the time of Mohammed to the beginning of the seventeenth century, the great leaders of insurrection, and the most formidable danger in the State, were the famous Janizaries, a proud body guard, which revived or continued under the eyes of the Sultan the tactics of the old Prætorians. By them Mustapha I. was deposed, restored, and finally murdered; while his rival, Osman, who had supplanted him by the assistance of these dangerous servants and of the Divan, was promptly made away with on the first sign of an attempt to curb their violence. In this century, the case of a Sultan who died in his bed was the exception rather than the rule. There is an open space in Constantinople, near the old aqueduct of Valens, called by the Turks Elmeidan. It is the regular place of meeting for malcontents and conspirators, and at this period it must have been quite the fashionable resort of the most influential Moslems. First an Ibrahim and a Mohammed were successively deposed; then a Mustapha and an Ahmed; and the latter three might well congratulate themselves on escaping the bowstring which was applied to Ibrahim.

The present century opened with fresh revolutions after a considerable period of calm. The later depositions had all been brought about by the failures of the respective Sultans in foreign expeditions. In China, the Celestial Emperors are famous for cutting off the heads of those generals who are defeated in war; but in the Sublime Porte the procedure was varied, and on the defeat of his armies, the Commander of the Faithful inserted his august neck in the noose held by an obsequious vizier. But the time was approaching for a final struggle between the old school, backed by the Janizaries, and the new school, headed by the new Sultans. In 1807, Selim III. boldly introduced European dress and European drill amongst the Ottoman troops. A revolt was the consequence, and the obnoxious innovator was besieged in the seraglio. Had he stuck to his colours he would, as it is thought, have triumphed. But he yielded, and Mustapha IV., the obedient tool of the Janizaries, was set up in his stead.

The usurper did not long enjoy the fruits of victory. On the news of a fresh revolt he had time to strangle the captive Selim, but not his younger brother Mahmoud. This youth, the last remaining scion of a royal race, was concealed by a faithful slave, and lived to succeed as soon as the bowstring had been applied to Mustapha. It was he who, after some years of careful preparation, achieved the ruin of the Janizaries.

An exciting scene it must have been when the Sultan raised the sacred flag of the Prophet, and called upon all the faithful to march against the troops who had made and unmade so many of his ancestors. Had the Janizaries again triumphed, there would have been another spell of military anarchy. But they were too weak this time. Surrounded in the Elmeidan, they stood at bay to the last; and, after a wild slaughter of their opponents, were exterminated by fire and sword. A new era was inaugurated. The great check on the Sultan's despotism was removed, and the fruits of it have been reaped in the fifteen years of stupid tyranny endured at the hands of Abdul Aziz.



THE NEW SULIAN ON THE WAY TO THE MOSQUE.

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER LI.—TOO LATE.

FRANK PRATT, the successful barrister, saw a portion of the scene from the pavement outside, where he formed one of the little crowd by the awning. He had been restlessly walking up and down, watching the lights and shadows on the blinds. He had gazed in at the open door at what seemed to him a paradise, as he heard the music and hum of conversation, scented the fragrance from flower and perfumes that floated out, and then called himself a miserable little beggar.

"Never mind," he said at last, lighting his pipe, and looking longingly at one of the tall obelisks at the door of a neighbouring mansion, and thinking what a capital perch it would make for him to sit and look on from—"never mind, bless her, she'll snub them like fun."

He felt better then, and saw Sir Felix and Vanleigh go up the carpeted steps without a pang. Ten times over he made up his mind to go and have a quiet little tavern supper, and then to his chambers and read; but he could not tear himself away; and so it was that he saw the arrival of the uninvited guest, and in the confusion that ensued witnessed something of what followed, standing aside to let Vanleigh come hurrying out, holding his neglected wife by the hand, furious, and yet too horror-stricken and remorseful to speak to her.

"A cab!" he shouted; and a minute after they entered, and the shabby screw was whipped into a gallop, and going in the direction of Pentonville.

Earlier in the evening Netta had seemed brighter, and had eaten heartily of some fruit Richard had fetched for her from Covent-garden. She was very weak, but she had begged to be dressed, and was lying upon the little couch; while Mrs. Jenkles, after helping, had gone down into the kitchen, where Sam was sitting at his tea, to look at him very fixedly, and then her face began to twitch and work.

"She aint worse, is she?" said Sam, in an awe-stricken whisper.

"Oh, Sam, Sam," sobbed the poor woman, bursting into tears; "and her so young, too. It's very, very sad."

"I sha'n't go out to-night, then," said Sam, a little more hoarsely than usual. "Ratty may have a holiday. It's a hill wind as blows nobody any good. If I do go to have a smoke, old woman, I shall be standing across the road in Mother Fiddison's doorway."

"Oh, Sam, it's very, very sad," sobbed Mrs. Jenkles again; "and her so young. If it had been her mother, or me!"

"Stow that, old gal," said Sam, with a choke. "If there's e'er a woman as can't be spared outer this here wicked world of pore cabmen and hard fares, it's you. What'd become o' me?"

"Oh, Sam," sobbed Mrs. Jenkles from inside her apron.

"I should go to the bad in a week, old gal. I should never pass a corner public without dropping in; and at the end of six months there'd be a procession o' cabs follering a subscription funeral, raised by threepenny bits and tanners; and every cabby on the ranks'd have

a little crape bow on his whip in memory o' Sam Jenkles as drunk hisself to death."

"Don't, pray, Sam," sobbed his wife.

"It's true enough, missus; and I b'lieve the chaps'd be sorry; while as for old Ratty, I b'lieve he'd cry."

"Sam!" sobbed his wife.

"I wonder," said Sam, dolefully, "whether they'd let the old 'oss follow like they do the soldiers, with my whip and boots hanging one side, and my old 'at on the other. Sh! here's Mrs. Lane."

"Mrs. Jenkles," said their lodger, hurriedly, "go and ask Mr. Lloyd to come over. She wants to see him."

"Is she worse, ma'am?"

The mother's lip quivered for reply; but after stifling a sob she gasped—

"And ask Mr. Reston, the doctor, to come in."

"I'll run for him, mum, while the missus fetches Mr. Lloyd," said Sam, hurrying away.

A few minutes after, Richard ascended to Netta's room, to be received with a smile of pleasure, and he took the seat to which the poor girl pointed.

"Are you better to-night, my dear?" he said, kissing her gravely.

"Yes, much," she said, retaining his hand and keeping it pinioned between hers. "I want you to sit and talk to me to-night—mamma will like to hear—about our rides, and the woods and flowers. Ah, how little I've seen of the country and flowers!"

She started as she caught a sigh from Mrs. Lane.

"You could not help it, dear," she said, hastily. "Don't think me ungrateful. Come and kiss me, and tell me you don't."

Mrs. Lane bent over her, and kissed her poor thin lips; and though the fount was nearly dry, a couple of burning tears fell upon the face of her child.

"If I could only be at rest about you," said Netta, drawing her mother closer to her, "I could be so happy. There, we've asked Mr. Lloyd to come, and here is a welcome."

She half playfully pointed to a chair, and once more took Richard's hand between both hers, listening to him as he tried to talk cheerfully, not so much of the past as of trips to come, till, meeting her eyes, and seeing in them the sad, reproachful gaze of one who said "Why this deceit?" his voice grew husky, and he was silent.

"What's that?" said Netta, suddenly, as she heard steps below. "Oh, mamma, you have sent for him again—why did you?"

There was tender love in the reproachful smile—one which faded as the doctor entered, and Richard gave up his place to him.

He made but a brief stay, and was followed out of the room by Mrs. Lane.

"Sit down again, Richard," said the girl, fondly. "Take those," she said, pointing to a pair of scissors on the table. "Now cut off that long piece of hair."

As she spoke she separated a long, dark brown tress, and smilingly bent towards him as he divided it from her head.

"There," she said, smiling, as she knotted it together like so much silk; "give that to Tiny—some day—and tell her it was sent by one who had prayed night and day for her happiness and yours."

"Oh! my poor child!" groaned Richard, as he placed her gift in his pocket-book.

"And Richard, when you are happy together, talk about me sometimes: you'll bring her to see where they have laid me—where I lie asleep?"

"For God's sake, do not talk like this, my darling," he exclaimed; "I cannot bear it."

"I must," she said, excitedly. "I must, the time is so short. Tell her, Richard," she whispered earnestly, "that I loved you very dearly; for I did not know then about her. But tell her it was so innocent and dear a love, that I think God's angels would not blame me for it. I would not talk so now, Richard, but I am dying."

He started up to run for help, but she feebly restrained him.

"No, no, don't go; it is not yet," she whispered. "Stay with me even when it's growing dark. Promise me you will stay and hold my hand till the last. I shall not feel so afraid then, and I don't think it can be wrong. I used to think once about you, so strong and brave; how in the future you would take care of me, and that I should never be afraid again. Then I used to sit and whisper your name, and stop from my work to kiss the flowers you sent me, every leaf and every blossom, and whisper to it, 'You are my darling's gift.' Was this wrong of me? I could not help it. No one knew, and I have been so different to others. My life has been all work and sorrow—her sorrow—and those were my happy moments."

"My poor darling!" was all he could utter; and the words came like a groan.

"Don't trouble about it," she whispered; "I'm not sorry to die. You have made me so happy. I feel as if I may take those tender words from you now, Richard. You called me darling twice to-night. Kiss me once again."

Tiny's name was on his lips as he bent over her, and raised the little frail form in his arms; and hers were wreathed around his neck as he pressed his lips to hers twice—lips which responded to the caress.

As he laid her tenderly back upon her pillow, she retained one of his broad, nervous hands, pressed her lips to it once, and then placed it feebly beneath her cheek, lying with her eyes half-closed, and her voice coming in a faint whisper as she said—

"I don't think she would be angry if she knew all. Ah! mother, darling, I did not know you had come back. Come here."

For Mrs. Lane was sitting in the corner of the room by the door, with her face buried in her hands.

She came and sat at the foot of the couch, unable to restrain her sobs.

"I could not help loving him, dear," she said, smiling; "he is so good and true. It was not the same love I have for you. Richard, you'll be rich again some day. You'll be kind to her?"

"Rich or poor, on my soul I will!" he exclaimed.

"She has worked so hard for me," said Netta, feebly. Then starting with a wildly anxious look upon her face, she uttered a strange, passionate cry as of one in intense mental agony.

"My child—my poor child!" cried Mrs. Lane, throwing herself on her knees by the couch.

"Why—why did I not think of it before?" cried Netta, wildly. "I ought to have thought— Oh, it will be too late."

"What is it—what can I do?" cried Mrs. Lane.

"Papa—papa—papa!" wailed the girl; "I must see papa."

Mrs. Lane sank in a heap with her head bowed down upon her knees.

"I—I must see papa," wailed Netta again—"I did not think before—I have something to say—it only came just now. Oh, mother, you will fetch him before it is too late."

Mrs. Lane started up and gazed wildly at her guest.

"Can I go? Can I do anything?" he exclaimed.

"No, no, stay with me," wailed Netta; "he would not come for you. Mamma, you will go. Dear mother, bring him here."

Without another word, Mrs. Lane ran into the next room and hurried on her things, returning to kiss the anxious, flushed face gazing so wistfully at her.

"You will not leave her?" she said, hoarsely.

"No, he will not go," moaned Netta; "but be quick—be quick."

Richard's heart beat fast, for, as he was left alone, Netta's eyes closed and a terrible pallor succeeded the flush. He was about to rise and summon Mrs. Jenkles, but Netta divined his intention, and uttered a feeble protest.

"You said you would not leave me. I am only tired. It is of no use."

She lay there with her cheek pillowed on his hand, and her eyes closed, but her lips moved gently; and as in that feebly-lighted room the solemn silence seemed to grow more painful, Richard felt a strange thrill of awe pass through him; for he knew that the words she softly whispered to herself were words of prayer.

After a time, Mrs. Jenkles softly opened the door and peered in.

"Can I do anything for you, my dear?" she said, gently.

"Yes," said Netta, in a faint whisper; "come here. Kiss me and say good-bye," she continued, after a pause. "Now go and tell Sam I have prayed for a blessing on you both for your kindness to the poor creature you found in such distress."

Mrs. Jenkles's sorrow, in spite of herself, found vent in a wail; and she hurried out of the room to weep alone by her own fireside.

Then an hour passed without a change, only that twice over the great soft, dilated eyes opened widely to gaze wonderingly about till they rested on Richard, when a faint smile came on the poor wan face, the thin cheek nestled down into the strong man's hand, and a faint sigh of content fluttered from the lips of the dying girl.

It must have been nearly eleven when Netta opened her eyes widely.

"They are very long," she said in a harsh, cracked voice—"very long; he must come soon. Why did I not think of it before?"

"She must soon return," said Richard. "Shall I send?"

"No, no! It would be no use," she whispered; and her great loving eyes rested fondly on his for a moment. "Do not let go of my hand, and I shall not feel afraid."

She sank back once more, but only to start at the end of a few moments.

"He's coming—yes, he's coming now."

Richard strained his ears to listen, but there was not

a sound; but as a smile of content came once more upon the anxious features, there was the roll of distant cab wheels, and he knew that the senses of the dying girl were preternaturally quickened.

The next minute the wheels stopped at the door, and there were steps on the stairs.

"He has come!" cried the girl, joyfully. "Lift me up in your arms, Richard, that I may see him."

As he responded to her wish, and held her up with her head resting upon his shoulder, the door opened, and, to his intense astonishment, the handsome man of fashion, looking sallow, haggard, and ten years older, with the great drops of sweat upon his face, and his hair clinging wetly to his brow, half staggered into the room.

"Papa, dear papa!" wailed the girl, stretching out one hand; and with a groan, as he read in her wasted features the coming end, he stumbled forward, to sink crushed and humbled to his knees before the face of death.

"My poor child!" he groaned.

"I knew—you would come," moaned the girl, faintly. "Mother—quick—papa—kind to her—once more—suffered so—so much—"

With her last strength, her trembling little fingers placed those of Vanleigh upon the hand of his neglected, forsaken wife; and then, as a shudder ran through her frame, her nerveless arm dropped, and her head turned away to sink pillowed on Richard's arm. There was a smile upon her lip, as her eyes were bent fixedly upon his, and then as he gazed he saw that their loving light faded, to give place to a far-off, awful stare, and a deep groan burst from the young man's breast.

Vanleigh started up at that, exclaiming wildly—

"Quick—a doctor—the nearest physician—do you hear!"

"It is too late, sir," said Richard, sadly. "Your child is dead."

The Man in the Open Air.

IT is with the greatest satisfaction we hear that steps are to be at once taken by the Royal Commissioners of Epping Forest (and let us hope elsewhere) to put into operation the Small Birds Protection Act, and thus stay the heartless massacre of our feathered songsters, which, so far as these splendid woods are concerned, have been almost entirely banished from their natural precincts. It was stated before the committee that, not contented with shooting down every tiny wren or moving creature that had the "angels' power to soar," gangs of fellows from Whitechapel were in the habit, during the nesting season, of carrying ladders into the forest, to rob the birds of their eggs and nests with the greater facility. Some speedy means are indeed wanted for preventing this heartless invasion and depopulation of the forest.

It may not be generally known that Connor, the landscape painter, whose works are now so eagerly sought after, was for years an almost daily frequenter of Epping Forest, nearly all his scenes being derived from the fine glades and bold, natural avenues and vistas which the forest offers to the eye at almost every turn. The accessories of cattle and figures were introduced at home, and thus a scene in the Forest of Bondy was, hey presto! made "true to life" by the

introduction of a bandit lurking behind the bole of an oak; or "A Fastness in Normandy" by the addition of a herdsman and cattle *à la* that region, and so on. Fortunately the characteristics of Epping suit almost any clime in Europe—"twas the spicing as did it," in the guise of a figure or two of "ye country;" and thus Connor, who never quitted Great Britain, painted half over the Continent, and admirers swore to the faithfulness of the transcript.

There is a very interesting article upon "Social Flowers" in "Cassell's," which all who love to reflect upon Nature's wonders while in the open air would do well to peruse. Such essays once read are seldom forgotten, and their suggestions become the dear companions of our lonely rambles, or the instruments of that surpassing wealth which we can freely give to our associates without the fear of exhausting it.

A pair of sparrows have built their nest in the cross-trees of the mainmast of the schooner *Five Sisters*, of Goole, at present lying in Berwick Harbour. The vessel is chartered to proceed to the Firth of Forth, there to load for France. It remains to be seen whether the sparrows will accompany the vessel to hatch their young, the female bird being now sitting on eggs. Mr. H. T. Archer says that he has written to the captain to let him know whether the sparrows follow the ship or not, and has promised to inform us as soon as he hears from him.

Some few years ago, attention was called by Mr. Peter Inchbald, of Hovingham, to a mining insect which tunneled the leaves of the primrose. That gentleman now tells us that he has had an opportunity of learning much of the life history of another of these plant miners, the fly that affects the sow thistle. The mines are not so elaborate, perhaps, as those which are shown in the epidermis of the primrose; but they are very interesting, as the white tracings show to advantage on the deep green surface of the sow thistle leaf. When leaves were gathered early in April, the pupa cases were mostly formed at the end of the tunnels. In May the flies began to emerge from the cases—active, brown little fellows, with abdominal bars bordered with yellow. Mr. Inchbald bred fully a dozen, and found the ovipositor of the female as well developed and quite as restless as the male.

The golden oriole was heard in Kent on the 16th of May. This, says W. B. D., in the *Field*, is rather an earlier date than in previous years for its arrival in that neighbourhood. To this an editorial note is appended:—"For the information of those who do not know our correspondent, we may add that he is annually visited in spring by the golden oriole; and one year a pair of these birds nested in his grounds—a circumstance since immortalised by Yarrell." Specimens of this bird have likewise been seen, one at Falmer, on the 5th of April, the other at Portslade a couple of days afterwards. They were unfortunately shot, and are now in the hands of a naturalist on the Lewes-road, Brighton, for stuffing. A specimen of this bird was likewise found dead on the 1st of April at Coolmain, Bandon, Ireland.

The first instant was the grand opening day for

general angling in the Thames. All reports concur as to the admirable state which the fisheries are in, both with regard to numbers of fish and their individual size and condition.

A ramble through parts of Wiltshire occupied our attention during the early part of the holiday week, but the wet weather very greatly blurred the views of the fine and extensive landscapes of that much-favoured county. We visited several favourite and picturesque spots, and much regretted to find that, since last making ourselves acquainted with these localities, the innovating hand of utilitarianism had been industriously at work; and many of the low and deep straw-thatched cottages, with their embedded roof windows, together with their massive, well-built, brick chimney-stacks, had disappeared, tiles or slates having transformed a group of picturesque dwellings—which would have detained an artist even on the road to his marriage—into square, ugly, flaring-roofed tenements, such as those which offend the eye in the neighbourhood of most large manufacturing towns. The sketcher may therefore take the hint, for Wiltshire is not alone in this march of rural improvement, and it may be that shortly food for the folio will have to be sought in but few places, and even these may be already doomed. It cannot, moreover, fail to escape the attention of the close observer that the manners and costume of the peasantry alter perceptibly with the changes undergone by their homes. The rustic groups we meet with, even far removed from the towns, savour of the middle shop-keeping class, and one common type in man, woman, and child appears to be fast taking the place of those many distinctions which separated one from another, as gold, silver, and halfpence. Railways and cheap clothing, with fashion plates in the cheapest productions, are rapidly working towards this end, which doubtless may be for good, but is sadly alarming to men in the open air, who go hunting with pencil pointed and lead ever primed for bits and studies of the pure and simple, such as once abounded in every hamlet and lane of merrie England. This transformation was nowhere more remarkable than in the hay-making fields—that agricultural operation having commenced in Wilts—in which the men employed had eschewed the knee breeches for long trousers, and the careless wide-awake or slouch brim for the chimney-pot hat. The women no longer peeped from under the nankeen bonnet, with its ample flaps of sunshades, nor had their gowns of printed calico tucked prettily up on one side, but wore full lower flounces and ungainly pull-backs, which seemed to fetter their limbs, and checked the honest uses for which they were designed—not that they affected silks and satins, but they had possessed themselves of the close imitations which are now produced so cheaply, and are brought into every village in the itinerant pedlar's pack.

We were shown two gardens in Devizes in which the borders of flower beds, of great extent, were wholly composed of the shin bones of animals, driven into the soil in a perpendicular position, and close together. The origin of this mode of garden decoration is not known to "the oldest inhabitant."

Few while in this neighbourhood can resist a ramble

in Savernake Forest. One may grieve over the removal of one's pet thatched little snuggeries, the winning ways of which are perhaps best manifested by the imitations which are now cropping up as lodge entrances to most of our parks and domains; but good humour is soon restored when one enters upon so wondrous a sylvan tract as is here presented. Think of a district sixteen miles in circumference, which, thanks to the good taste of the Marquis of Aylesbury, still displays a magnificence of forest scenery which, with its majestic oaks and silver-boled beeches, reminds us, at almost every turn, of the best transcripts from nature of Hobbima, and the *élite* of our own great landscape painters. We believe Savernake to be the only forest in England in possession of a subject, but nevertheless it is right regal in every feature. There is a vast wealth of all that can aid in impressing the general grandeur of nature upon the mind. Yet there are especial objects of interest: for instance, the curious will search out the King Oak, or the Duke's Vaunt, a tree of fabulous antiquity, so called from having been a favourite of Protector Somerset—the creeping oak behind the keeper's cottage, one of the limbs of which, like a huge boa, seems to crawl along the ground for a considerable way; then the avenue of beeches, four miles long—longer by far than the long walk at Windsor—and the apparently endless glades and drives in every direction. There is a station on the Reading and Devizes branch of the Great Western, close to one of the entrances to the forest; and as the whole, together with the house, which is well worth a visit, can be inspected when the family are away, a most agreeable day, a picnic included, might be passed in this splendid portion of the jointure of Queen Eleanor, and which fell in after-times by grant to the family of Seymour, Dukes of Somerset, from whence, in 1676, it passed by marriage to the Bruces.

While in the forest we had the opportunity of watching the cuckoo carry an egg in its mouth, and deposit it in a nest in a holly bush. Whether this bird first laid the egg—as is suggested—on the ground, and then carried it to the home in which, when hatched, it was to become tyrant and sole master, we cannot say; but the act of transferring the egg to the nest would not admit of doubt.

In returning home, we were glad to learn that anglers had met with more than average success in the Thames, and that the barbel, so varied and so capricious in their appetites, had given an earnest that Whitsuntide—with them, at least—was not a season of fast.

WHEN a man to whom you lend money says he will be indebted to you for ever, you may believe him, my boy.

OFF THE BOARDS.—We reproduce the following anecdote attributed to a noted comedian, commonly called by his confrères "Johnny." Spending a Sunday evening with Dismal, the eminent tragedian, and other colleagues of the footlights in a provincial city, there was a brilliant flash of silence in the conversation. It was nine p.m. "Wake up, Dismal!" said a leading juvenile. "You that are so pleasant and chatty, how comes it that you're out of sorts?" "Hush!" said Johnny. "Know you not that this is the hour at which he usually dies?"

Very Celestial.

IN most countries it is common, if not fashionable, for widows to seek for consolation in remarriage. At Foochow, in China, however, it appears that bereaved ladies look upon the loss of their spouses with more serious regret, if the story which has come by the overland China mail can be taken as fairly illustrating the habits of the people who dwell in that part of the Celestial Empire.

A short time since, a young woman belonging to the Cheng family lost her spouse. There were amongst her friends those who counselled a surcease of sorrow, and who told the lady that they were intimately acquainted with a gentleman to whose care she might safely confide her future. But, unhappily, Mrs. Cheng had made up her mind, and the decision she had come to was none other than to hang herself, or, as the phraseology is in that delightful corner of the globe, "to ascend to Heaven on the back of a stork."

Whereupon, as it was clear that the widow meant what she said, the relatives at once made arrangements that all things should be done decently and in order. An exceedingly tasteful and pretty gallows was erected at the back of a temple lately built, and to the cross piece, which overhung a table that could be easily kicked away, was suspended a piece of red cord fitted with a sliding knot.

All along the road leading from the lady's house to the place of immolation were deposited little offerings or presents of viands and wine; and on the day appointed, a tom-tom procession, with a sedan chair, called at Mrs. Cheng's dwelling-place. Here they found the fair devotee ready, richly dressed in ornamental papers like a goddess, and wearing on her head a paper crown like that of a princess.

Mounting the sedan chair, on which there was placed a red cloth, she gave orders to the *cortège* to move forward; and as they went past the houses of her parents and friends to bid them good-bye, she was "visible," we are told, "to all the spectators, smoking a pipe and smiling." Now and then she would stop to taste the offerings which had been placed on the road for her, bowing to the people who looked on, and distributing red flowers amongst them.

At last, the scaffold being reached, she ascended the platform in the presence of over seven thousand people, about three thousand of whom were splendidly attired, as if attending a wedding, and bowed to six men who were standing close by her, and who were dressed in Court costume with crystal or gold buttons. Then in a loud voice she called out—

"Heaven and earth and my friends, I am quite satisfied that I am dying in this manner."

Having said this, she jumped up on to the table, put her head in the noose, and, while a red cloth was being put over her face, kicked the foot-rest away, and was forthwith suspended. A quarter of an hour later her body was carried home in the sedan chair, and a funeral ceremony, which the local chronicler estimates cost a thousand dollars, took place.

An unsatisfactory element in the story is that, so delighted were the lady's neighbours at her method of quitting the world, that a little boy who had witnessed the suicide went away at once to a mill hard by, and most successfully hung himself also.

A River-side Ramble in Devon.

YOU thread a narrow path along a grassy sward. Beneath, the soft, verdant carpeting is thickly strewn with wild flowers; above you a delightful canopy formed of the interlaced branches of trees, through which the screened sunlight softly falls. On your right a high embankment, leading up to a higher path on the hillside, from out of which hang tufts of fern fronds, mingled in charming variety; down to your left rolls the river, whose music joins in chorus with the songs of the birds—singing, you know not where, but everywhere around you.

As you follow this charming river-side path, you have from time to time to press through the dense masses of shrubs which surround you—now hanging down overhead, now springing out from the left, and now from the right side.

The small but startling incidents of the route add a sort of piquancy to the enjoyment. The sudden flutter and the wild cry of a blackbird, as it darts out of the tiny thicket where its nest is hid; the rustle in the high embankment on your right, and the quivering of the fern-fronds, followed by the sudden flight across the path of a rabbit, or the rolling, hurrying, scurrying contortions of a snake, which your unexpected appearance may have surprised basking in the tiny gleam of sunshine which has fallen on to the greensward through an opening in the trees overhead; the heavy splash in the river on your left, as a water-rat, which had not dreamed of your unwelcome intrusion, takes the shortest and readiest path to his hole, diving one moment in one place under the stream, to reappear the next somewhere else, under the belief that meanwhile you may think his power of holding his breath is unlimited; or the lighter splash of the trout, as, unaware of your presence, it rises in the dark, deep pool near you, at the tempting palmer-fly that has just dropped from the bushes.

All these sights and sounds contribute to the delight of this river-side ramble. Or you may rest for a moment, and, peering cautiously around you, so as not to disturb the free inhabitants of this woodland, admire and enjoy their unrestrained movements. The snake will wriggle on to the sunlit path again; the rabbit will come quietly out from his hiding-place; the rat will return from his hole; the trout will skim about on the surface of the river close to where you are sitting, if your shadow does not fall across the sunlit pool.

As you sit and rest, you may listen with a deep sense of enjoyment to the soft buzzings of the insects which surround you; and watch the bushes, the grass, the ground, and the water. Everywhere there is life—fresh, delightful, enjoyable life.

The Fern Paradise. By Francis George Heath.

AN Oxford Don, who has a knack of telling very good stories, but, unfortunately, like most other habitual retailers of anecdotes, a habit of repeating them, was rather neatly snubbed the other day. Being half suspicious of his failing, he often prefaces his stories with some such remark as "You may know this," or "Perhaps you have heard," &c.; and on the occasion in question he began as usual—"I dare say you may have heard this story before—" "I don't know," replied his auditor, quietly; "I don't recognize it yet."

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER XIV.—THE STRANGER AT THE LOVELY NAN.

MENTION has more than once been made of Jacob Ember, the Thames boatman, and his son Joe, who assisted him in his calling or avocation.

The said calling, or avocation, Jacob comprehensively described as "picking up a living." The term was a little vague, but perhaps none the worse for that—seeing that while it might be held to include a good deal, it left plenty of play to the imagination. A man with a boat on the Thames has plenty of opportunities of earning money, especially if he is not very scrupulous as to how he earns it.

Jacob was not at all scrupulous.

And as he had been born by the riverside, and inherited a boat and a silver watch from his father, who was drowned in the river, and came into possession of a fresh boat (to replace the old one) and another silver watch with his wife, who had also the misfortune to be drowned in the river, and so all his life had enjoyed the means of "picking up a living," it was popularly held down his way that the living he picked up was a pretty decent one, and that young Joe would come into "something pretty tidy" when it should please the river to take Jacob himself to its cold bosom.

Meanwhile Jacob, not at all proud, dwelt in a little four-roomed house, in a detestable little court, which had only one claim to consideration—namely, that of being conveniently close to the Lovely Nan public-house, which Jacob frequented. When not on the river, and not in bed, Jacob might usually be found at the Lovely Nan, in which house of call he was so much at home that one of his two silver watches hung on a nail over the mantelpiece of the snugery behind the bar, and was the accredited timepiece of the neighbourhood.

There seemed no good reason why Jacob should have had a house at all, but, he said, "a man must have a place to sleep in—and there was Joe." But as he slept more in the arm-chair at the Nan and in his boat than he did in his bed, people were wont to urge that by a little arrangement with the landlady, Mrs. Pouter, the bed might have been dispensed with altogether. Still, as Jacob said, "there was Joe." And as Mrs. Pouter said also—often with a sigh—"there was Joe." And Joe heard these remarks with anything but satisfaction, for he knew that he was an encumbrance, an impediment and a nuisance, and it is not pleasant to regard oneself in those points of view.

It was Jacob's privilege to sit in the snugery at the Lovely Nan, and to enjoy so much of Mrs. Pouter's company as was consistent with a pretty lively bar trade.

But, as Jacob had been known to remark—

"What's the use? Where's the enjoyment of a 'ooman's comp'ny, thof she do sit in a black sating gownd that show her figger, when her 'ead is continually turned to see whose a-comin' in and whose a-goin' out, when her ringulets keeps a-dancin' backwards and forards like a row o' bells, and she allays up and off afore you can get a word in edgeways?"

The impossibility of deriving much solid enjoyment

from this state of things often drove Jacob to seek amusement in the sanded parlour on the other side of the bar. There he was received with the respect due to a man who might one day be master of the Lovely Nan; and there he found amusement in the society of his friends, and of the strangers who occasionally dropped in to seek the solace of a pipe and glass.

Among the latter, there happened about this time to be a pretty frequent visitor of a somewhat mysterious character. A seafaring man, of a superior type, this was; with a bronzed face that spoke of recent travel, and something in his look and manner—rough, savage, and suspicious. As he was not known, and had dropped in casually one night, it was concluded that he had just come ashore; and as he came again and again, it was surmised that he was remaining in the neighbourhood.

But he gave no information on these or other points.

If people asked him questions, he either affected not to hear, or gave them answers so mixed up with foreign words that they were not to be understood. And he was not a man to insult for this or any other rudeness.

As was remarked of him in his absence—

"He looked a chap as would knife you as soon as look at you."

And, to do him justice, he had that aspect.

On some nights the stranger would not utter a word, but would sit moodily smoking a short pipe, and enveloping himself in a haze in which he was invisible. Rum was the key which unlocked his lips; but as he drank it raw, and could take a bottle at a sitting with ease, it seldom overcame him, or betrayed him into garrulity. But when he could be got to talk, his conversation was rich and picturesque, full of facts and of personal adventure; then, indeed, he was a delightful companion.

Singularly enough, this man took an early liking to Jacob Ember. Jacob did not usually impress strangers, perhaps because a large man with a raw face, full of cunning, and with a firm conviction that the entire universe was interested in his personal exploits, was not calculated to impress them; but this man, as he boasted, "took to him."

The occasion of his taking to him was this:—

Jacob could no more keep a secret than an inverted glass can hold liquor. So on the first night of the stranger's presence there he was moved to state, for the information of all present, that he had recently fallen in with a mysterious "fare" in the persons of two "gents," who had made arrangements with him for being rowed swiftly and secretly across the Thames and back whenever they might require his services, he always holding himself in readiness between certain hours, given signals to be observed, and no words spoken on either side. For this he was handsomely paid, as it was only right he should be, seeing that it involved much waiting, and occupied no inconsiderable time. He added that, being curious as to the destination of these people, he had set his boy Joe to watch them, and found that they went straight to Scratchell's old house—a tumble-down old place known to most of his auditors—long in Chancery, and supposed to be haunted.

This was enough to awaken curiosity.

The communicative Jacob, seeing the impression he had made, proceeded to add that he had reason to believe that the persons thus requiring his secret aid had been watched by others; indeed, he had mis-

givings that his boy Joe had been bought over to act as a spy in somebody's behalf, on proof of which he should proceed to break every bone in that boy's body. Further, that on the preceding night his customers reappeared much earlier than they were accustomed to do, and then to his surprise he found the elder of the two half carried in the other's arms, and saw that he was faint and bleeding, his arm being tightly bandaged with handkerchiefs. He did not dare ask how this had happened, because it was part of his bargain not to open his lips to his fare. And though the wounded man fainted before the river was crossed, and they had finally to carry him to a cab, which, as usual, awaited them on the Rotherhithe side, he could learn nothing that would throw light on the mystery.

"It didn't seem a likely part for gents to come and fight a dool in," he ventured to surmise.

"No, it was not," all present agreed.

The stranger listened, and said nothing. But afterwards he worked round so as to sit next Jacob, and asked so many questions, and took so much interest in the boatman's mystery, that the latter was delighted, and a friendliness began which each successive night served to strengthen.

And before the week was out this singular thing happened—the stranger proposed to become Jacob's lodger, to occupy the fourth room in the miserable little house in the suffocating court.

This, too, was ultimately decided on.

By a fortunate coincidence, the liking the stranger formed for Jacob he extended to his boy Joe. To the rough lad he unbent more than to anybody else, telling him tales of sea life, calculated to shame him out of conceit of the sluggish riverside existence, and inflaming his imagination with all sorts of wonders. The thing which annoyed Jacob was that the two came in time to have many secret interviews in which the father was not permitted to take part. Now, as the ignorant are always suspicious, he decided in his own mind that these could be for no good—his special suspicion being that the man was trying to decoy the lad away from his calling, and so deprive his father of services of no inconsiderable value.

This made the man angry, but he said nothing, not wishing to lose his lodger; and the two went together to the Lovely Nan, night after night, as cordially as if nothing had happened—Jacob even absenting himself more and more from Mrs. Pouter's bower to enjoy the pleasure of his friend's society.

It was on a morning after one of these pleasant gatherings at the Lovely Nan that the following happened.

CHAPTER XV.—A STRANGE ENCOUNTER.

THE morning was so bright that Arthur Pembrose, seeing how gay the Grove looked, had determined to walk into town to business.

His spirits rose in the sunshine, and as he went swinging along at a smart pace the sensation of freshness and exhilaration was delicious. Life seemed to have lost the gloominess it habitually wore. Hope touched the cloudy thoughts that darkened his mind, and lent them golden hues.

Even the remembrance of Ruby, which was wont to give him a sad, pensive satisfaction, was that morning invested with positive pleasure. He did not dwell

wholly on the past, or on the hopelessness of his love for her. Carried away by an enthusiasm natural to the young, he allowed himself to yield to a delusion—to a dream of delirious happiness, until he half persuaded himself that the future would give some recompense for the past, and that what might be would be.

"What if I should unmask this snake in the grass?" he muttered, half aloud. "If I should expose him, and save the father from the entanglements in which he is getting involved? If I should so open her eyes that she no longer cares for or pines for the man who has treated her so cruelly? And what if then, in reward for my fidelity, or out of a growing feeling of inclination, friendliness, or love itself—and why not?—she should one day give me to know that I was not indifferent to her, and that if her father consented, she would not be unwilling—Pshaw! What a dream! He must be a bold clerk that would ask Framlingham Brothers for his daughter's hand."

That thought sobered him a bit.

But it is pleasant to dream, even when we know we are only dreaming, and he soon relapsed into the same train of reflections, casually wondering by the way how Whittington mustered up courage to ask the hand of his master's daughter, and was soon as hopelessly sanguine as ever.

Intent on this business of castle-building, the young man was yet sufficiently on the alert as to what was passing about him to have noticed that three distinct times in less than a mile he had met a particular face, which on each occasion had regarded him with singular intentness.

The face was that of a man—a seafaring man—fierce-eyed, shaggy, and savage.

When this happened the third time, he bethought him that it was strange. With this impression on his mind he looked back, and then found that the seafaring man was also looking back. Their eyes met. They hesitated. Then the stranger came boldly up, and spoke.

"You don't know me, sir," he said—"leastways, it's not likely as you do. But I know you, and would like to have a word with you, if so be you didn't mind my walking your way a bit."

"I cannot mind," Arthur returned; "but really I'm at a loss—"

"No doubt, no doubt," the other broke in; "but you've some knowledge of a young friend o' mine—young Joe Ember—and you can guess what it is I want to talk about."

Arthur's surprise was intense, and found expression in his face.

"I have employed the lad to do me a service," he said; "but I was not aware that he had taken a stranger into my confidence, so far as I have taken him into it."

"Maybe—you're right," was the careless answer; "but, you see, a boy's just a sponge. You can squeeze him dry when you will. But that's not it. It so happens that you and me are on the same tack. You've no love for Hilton Gathorne—you see, I know his name—and I'll have his life before I've done. His life, I tell you—I'll have it."

"Has he so injured you that you are thus so vindictive?" Arthur asked.

"Injured me? Look here. Where should I be now

if he'd had his will? Where do you think? Where, man? Why, among the sharks—in forty fathom o' blue water. But that's not all. That's not the worst, nor a tithe of the worst. I had a sister— But that's nought to you. Let's get back to what's brought me to look you up. What is it you suspect, and what is it you want to prove?"

"Well," returned Arthur, "since you put your questions so plainly, I suspect that Edmund Harcourt is Hilton Gathorne—"

"Right."

"And that he is, in his new character, playing his old tricks."

"Right again."

"Further, I suspect that he is, with others, trying to swindle our firm out of twenty thousand pounds, the amount for which the ship *Hannah* is insured by us, that ship having been unfairly sent to the bottom. So much for what I suspect; the truth of this is what I want to prove."

"And you shall prove it, man," said the other. "I know this is Gathorne, and I'll bring you men of the *Hannah*—men saved out of the wreck—who'll swear to the foul play. There's my hand on't."

He grasped the small, gloved hand of the younger man, and held it in his broad, hard palm as in a vice, till the fingers were squeezed flat. The torture was borne, but its victim did not express that lively satisfaction evidently expected of him. He looked serious as he proceeded deliberately to separate his fingers one by one.

"It will be hard, no doubt," he said, "for you to comprehend the difference between assertion and proof. Understand me, I do not for one moment doubt your word; but you do little more than I have done, unaided, to remove the obstacles in my path. You can swear, perhaps, that this is Gathorne, and your oath will have its value; but we must not forget that the audacity of the man has fortified his position so that an oath can scarcely affect it. A coward, or a less insolent swindler, would have fled from justice to the ends of the earth; this man wisely comes back to England, enters society under false colours, and plays his part so well that only an accident, only the merest slipping aside of the mask, reveals the face under it. For four years he has been in England with a price on his head, unsuspected, and by means of a confederate or two as deep in the mire as himself, he is able to play the old game with impunity. This I *know*; but I am powerless to prove it."

"But I'll swear—"

"And who will believe your oath? No jury in the world, unless it is backed up by circumstances so strong as to be irresistible. Then, again, as to his complicity in the matter of the *Hannah*. What if these men should swear—which they probably cannot—that there has been foul play? How are we to connect him with it? That is my difficulty, and I doubt if you can show me a way out of it."

Jack Faroe (so he was named) reflected, walked with his head on one side, and turned over slowly in his mind what he had heard, just as he would have turned over a quid in his mouth, and with about as profitable a result.

"Suppose the worst?" he presently blurted out.

"You mean—suppose we establish the identity of

Gathorne and Harcourt, and bring the man's crimes home to him?"

"Yes. What then?"

"He will be made to suffer—"

"To suffer what?"

"In all probability, a long term of exile from his country. But you know a felon's fate as well as I can tell you. It is not one that any human being can contemplate without horror."

Faroe thrust his hands deep into the pockets of the reefing jacket he wore, and without looking at his companion, though they were walking along smartly side by side, gave a short, sharp laugh. It was so like the snarl of a wild beast, that Arthur Pembrose turned sharply, unable to realize this new phase in the conduct of his strange companion.

"You seem amused!" he said.

"I am amused," was the curt answer—"amused to think how lightly you'd let this villain off, if his fate were in your hands. You're soon satisfied, you are. But there, you don't owe him what I owe him."

There was something so savage in the utterance of these words, accompanied as they were with a grinding of the teeth and a clenching of the hands, that Pembrose felt his blood chill in his veins.

He bore Harcourt no good will; but ferocious vindictiveness was foreign to his nature. He could not realize it, and shuddered at the form in which it found expression.

"This man has no doubt wronged you deeply—" he was beginning in reply.

"Wronged me!" the other interrupted. "He's done me that wrong as nothing in this world can set right. He's been that to me and mine as only his life 'll pay for. He's a villain."

"No doubt, but—"

"He's treated friend and foe alike."

"That may be."

"To serve his own ends he's been cruel, treacherous, vindictive. What craft hasn't he practised? What crime hasn't he put his hand to?"

"He is a bad man, no doubt," interrupted the young man, impatiently; "but no man is all bad. The worst among us has his redeeming points. You speak of him not as a man, but a fiend. Why, if he'd been guilty of the foulest crimes that can disgrace humanity, you could not be more hard upon him."

Faroe stopped short, and instinctively his companion did the same.

"Will you swear to keep my secret till it's safe for me to let you speak out?" said the rough seaman.

"If you think any purpose will be served by your taking me into your confidence," Arthur replied.

"In your ear, then. Listen!"

He put his hand on the other's shoulder, and drew him down till he could speak with ease and secrecy.

Then he gave utterance to a few short, earnest words.

Arthur Pembrose recoiled as he listened. His colour went—a nervous tremor seized his hands.

"This cannot be true," he exclaimed.

"If these are my last words, it is the truth."

There was a solemnity in that asseveration not to be doubted.

"Now you can understand why the thought of him turned my blood to gall, and why I say that I will never rest till I have had his life. No; I won't take it

if I can help it, though the sight of him turns the air all blood, and makes me a frenzied man, so as I don't know what I do. But I'll have it. Justice shall give it to me, as sure as there's a sun shining aloft there!"

With the hand that he had raised towards the heavens as he spoke, he gave Arthur a hearty grip, and, with a few hasty, muttered words, turned away and went.

It seemed as if his own words had raised a devil in his breast which he mistrusted his power to control.

The young man looked after him a second or two; then, sick at heart, pursued his onward course. The whispered words haunted him, and filled his mind to the exclusion of every other thought. And it was not until he neared his destination that he gave vent to his pent-up emotions.

"And this Harcourt might have called Ruby his wife!" he ejaculated, in a voice choked with horror.

Queer Cards.

CHAPTER VIII.—THE STORY OF THE KNAVE OF DIAMONDS.

"I SHALL die, but I must tell you first what it was that drove me to this, besides my own devilish temper, that makes me here upon my death-bed glory in old Feene's lying a corpse in this house before my own time comes.

"When he was younger, and I was a wild lad, we were both in the army—in a regiment quartered in one of these islands; but he was an officer, I a private. Perhaps you knew the man? If you did, you knew a man with a heart and temper that were just the readiest tools that the devil could have used to turn everybody to a fierce hate and spite against their owner. Many's the time I've looked into his gallows, sneering, yellow face, when he's been talking to our fellows, and felt murder bubbling up in my blood, and driving me to thrust my bayonet into him.

"Perhaps some such thought may have been seen in my eyes; perhaps I was insolent to him, as he said I was—for I hated him, and I was too drunk to disguise it—but at all events he had me flogged. If ever you know what it is to feel revenge, imagine it ten thousand times as strong as yours, and that's what mine was. I could have murdered him then, but that would have been poor payment, for I should have been hanged for it, and I was afraid to die, as I am now.

"But I'll tell you what I did. He sold out of the regiment before my back healed of the weals that he'd laid upon it, and when he sold out I deserted. It don't matter where I got the money from to get away, there were plenty round me who could afford to lose it; and I disguised myself and reached Kingston, where an old half-pay had settled in a business where he knew that I could help him.

"Fine feathers make fine birds, and I was a gentleman fond of play. While Mr. Feene was in England he'd left a steward over his estate out here; he was a gentleman like me, and fonder of play than I was, though he lost very often—for we played for high stakes, and my friend (it was to his house we went of an evening) generally backed this gentleman's luck, so that he lost too.

"All of a sudden we missed him, and before the news of his having bolted reached England, both my pal and me had spent half the money, 'for what's got over the devil's back goes under his elbow.'

"But I hadn't done yet, for there was another pigeon in sight; and when Mr. Feene got back to Jamaica with his daughter, he found his son, that he'd left behind him, pretty deep in debt, and going on at a rate that couldn't last. He was an officer too, was young Richard Feene, but not like his father. Still, I hated him because he was his father's son; and I spent half my evenings in his company.

"His regiment was officered by a set that stopped at nothing, so long as they had the money to meet their debts for play; and I knew them all. Well, me and my pal together—for he only cared for money, and didn't know that I had another passion that was stronger than the wish for gain—had him for our guest for a whole week; for we played every night—played and drank (and there were always men there that could do both) till daybreak; and then he'd go out for an hour or two, to pass away the time till the candles were lighted again over the green baize.

"We had been losing fearfully, and my partner was nearly mad because I would keep on taking young Feene's notes of hand; but he was getting desperate, and I knew I should have my revenge.

"Well, one night he lost heavily, for he'd been doubling the stakes; and at last he fell down, with his hands over his face, upon the table, and swore he was ruined. I got him out of the room, and made him have something to cool him; and then I heard he'd given paper for every penny of the estate his mother left him, and that he was a beggar.

"Well, I knew that he kept some of the best company in Kingston; and after I'd calmed him down a bit, I began to persuade him to borrow some money, telling him (what they all believe) that the luck must change, and that I'd back his luck myself if I didn't happen to play in the same set. I knew that in the morning he'd think of all this, and I meant to ruin him.

"Little did I think of the way the young fool was going to borrow in the morning; I heard all this afterwards. He goes to a lady that had been a friend of his mother's—one of the leading fashionables of the island. He'd dressed himself with the greatest care, and found her at home. He was waiting there, talking and wondering how he could bring out about the money he wanted, when what should come into her head but she must ask him if he'd seen a new diamond bracelet that had been sent her from England for a present.

"It was a valuable thing; and, as young Feene fingered it over, it came into his head that there was an amount of money in his hand that might save him. So he hatched up a story about his sister, and at last asked the lady's leave to take the bracelet home to show her, at the same time turning the key in the case.

"She refused at first, but he swore he would bring it back the next morning, and she was fond of him, and let it go. Whether he intended to raise money on it, and found afterwards that wouldn't do, I never knew; but at night he reeled into the room, while it was half full of men, and came up to the table where we were playing.

"You'll let me have my revenge, I suppose, after last night's work?" said he.

"And I saw his eyes looked bloodshot, and that he seemed years older than he was in the morning.

"How could I help it if I was to play against him? I took good care of that, for I saw he had money.

"What are the stakes?" says he.

"Ten pounds, at present," says my pal—for he was in it too.

"Well, I haven't the money," he said, "and I don't suppose you'll take paper; but here's an old family stone, worth quite that amount."

"And down he threw a diamond, taken out of the setting.

"He won, and lost, and won again, and doubled the stakes at every game; and there I sat and thought of his dead father—no, no, no! he wasn't dead then, but he's dead now!—and I thought of him, and of my scarred back, while I cheated the young fool.

"Oh! he turned purple and white, and his hands trembled, when the eighteenth diamond was swept off the table; and then he sprung up and hurled a heavy bottle at me, and rushed away, nobody knew where. And now he's in England, a beggar, and his father's dead!

"We lost everything, for none of his bills were taken up, and the old man ruined us; for we were obliged to shift our quarters, and ever since I've been hanging on at some little hell or another, waiting to have more revenge.

"And this is the end of it—he's dead, and the son's a beggar, and I'm dying! You're the man that killed me, aren't you? I'm dying."

CHAPTER IX.—THE KNAVE OF SPADES COMES TO THE END OF HIS YARN.

"WELL, he sunk down all of a heap, and I groaned to myself to think what I might have been but for God's goodness, when I felt that I wanted revenge against old Feene years before. I tried to say a few words to call his mind to better things, and he lay there staring at me, and moaning in a woeful way, till broad daylight; then a gentleman comes into the room, and sits down on the other side of the bed without a word, and as the sick man turned towards him I left them alone, for I knew who it was: it was the chaplain of our ship, and he'd come off directly he could, to see whether he could do any service.

"I didn't forget my promise to Miss Rose, and after staying a day or two with them and their dear little ones, and seeing both the dead men put in the ground, my dear little maid that had appeared to me on the ladder, and asked me to come and help her, had to kiss her sailor and tell him to come back soon. But I went to see mother's grave, and to visit father in the workhouse, and then I made the acquaintance of all my old neighbours, and low publics, and slums, and thieves' lodging-houses again; for I'd set myself to find Richard Feene if he was above ground.

"I made several voyages after this, and have been times without number to workhouses, to prisons, to hospitals—among thieves, and beggars, and soldiers—and no tidings could I hear of him, except, years ago, that a man answering his description had enlisted in a regiment, and deserted just before they started for the West Indies.

"This is my last voyage, and when I go back it will be to end my days with my dear Miss Rose. Bless

her! she's a fine portly lady now; and my dear little maid is waiting for her sailor to go back and see her wedding.

"That's not all. I was wrecked off the British coast before I reached here, and only got off with such money as I had about me. I go on tramp in real earnest now, and after such long waiting, on this very day I overtake a man by the hedge-side, half dead and numbed with cold. I take him on with me to get food and shelter, and here he sits—the man I've walked hundreds of miles to see, and never found before."

As the old man had ceased speaking, they saw that the pale ragged tramp had covered his hollow eyes with those thin, transparent hands, and the tears were trickling through his fingers on to the rough deal table. As he looked up, however, his companion laid his brown hand cheerily on his shoulder, and the broken beggar brightened at the touch, and said—

"Everything that he has told you is true, and I am, or rather I was, the Knave of Diamonds."

Yashmak Land.

IT is just at this time of the year, when the capital of the Ottoman Empire stretches throughout the whole twenty miles' length of the Bosphorus, that the unmatched loveliness of this channel is seen to the greatest advantage; it is at this season that it assumes all the charms with which the hand of Nature and the work of man have combined to invest it. Already, in spite of the unusually late spring and the prevalence of nipping northern gales, the pent-up life of Stamboul, of Pera, and of Galata was beginning to pour itself out to its wonted haunts in the immediate neighbourhood; the favourite spots of Flamoore and Maslak were all alive with the gay, though clumsy, dresses of yashmaked Turkish ladies; and all along the borders of Eyoob's cemetery, or on the sward of the fresh meadows of the Sweet Waters Valley, such scenes of quiet, decorous enjoyment presented themselves to the stranger's eye as he had, perhaps, never witnessed at any of the choicest gatherings at Richmond Park or Chiswick Gardens, at Longchamps or the Bois. There are no waters like those Sweet Waters, no turf like the soft moist turf under the trees of the Sultan's park at Kijagat-ghané; nowhere can one see such myriads of swift-gliding caiques as dart under the bridges of that pure stream at the top of the Golden Horn, as they come down at the close of a Friday outing, fraught with the inmates of the harems, the dark-eyed hanoums hugging their quaintly-dressed, happy, yet wildly staring, open-mouthed children to their bosom. The Turks, be it said to their praise, are fond of the open air; and they enjoy it all the more keenly as it is with the better half of them a rare treat, and the other half objects to the locomotion by which its blessings can be attained. Walking as mere exercise comes not natural to the Osmanlis: their idea of earthly bliss is to sit in a boat, to squat cross-legged on the grass, or on a mat under the trees, or the hundred tents or booths reared as *cafés* wherever custom brings them together—at Flamoore, near the top of Boogoorloo, wherever shade and a fresh spring are to be had—to sit or lie there hour after hour, smoking much, talking little, and gazing with quiet wonder, but

without apparent ill-will, at the groups of Greeks, Armenians, and Franks flitting past them; gazing at them, and giving no sign unless spoken to; but whenever civilly addressed, immediately removing the chi-

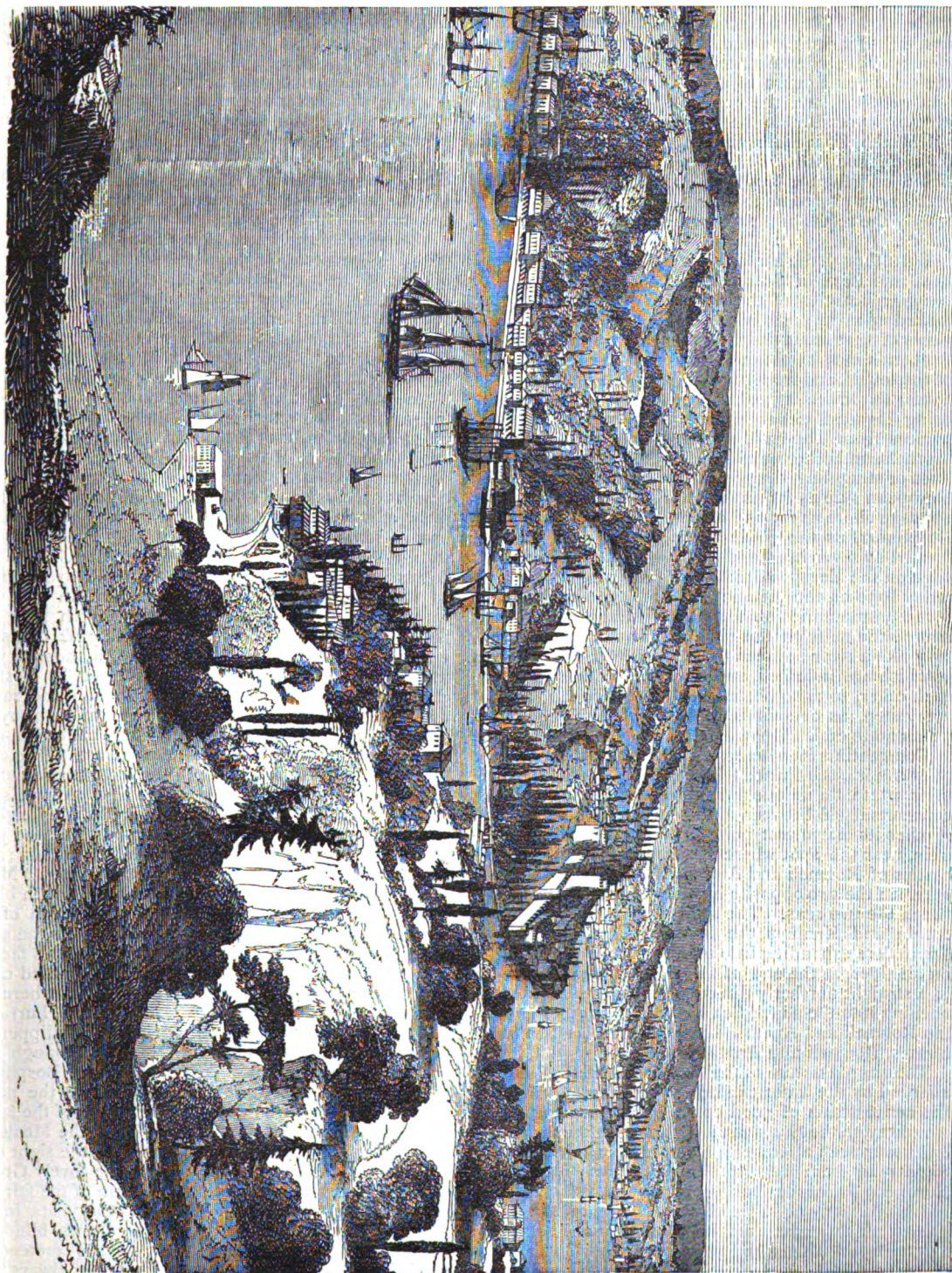
with which men of different race and hostile creed, men of all classes, blend together at these rustic rendezvous—the Mollah, the Softa, the squalid Dervish going past the veiled Armenian bishop, the broad-brim-



THE GOLDEN HORN.

bouque from their lips, and entering into conversation with a stately courtesy, and even with a jovial cordiality, completely belying the sternness of their impassive countenances. To see them; to see the ease and grace

hatted Latin priest, the cowled Franciscan, and the flap-bonneted Sister of Charity—one would fancy that all these people acknowledge each other as ministers of the same God of Peace, and that such untoward



EAST VIEW OF THE BOSPHORUS.

outbreaks as the massacres of Damascus, of Jeddah, and Salonica are the mere fabrications of lying chroniclers; for the normal state of this motley population of the Ottoman Empire is, after all, mutual forbearance and goodwill, and the outbursts of evil passions are almost invariably to be traced to the influence of rulers who, from the beginning, founded their sway on division, and who, when urged to attempt reforms based on religious and political equality, plead their inability to overcome that popular fanaticism which is simply the result of their own bigoted and ungenerous policy.

But although the immediate neighbourhoods of Stamboul and Pera, of Scutari and Kadiköy, can boast of peculiar beauties of their own, they can scarcely be looked upon as parts of the Bosphorus; for although views of that strait and its magnificent opening on the Propontis may be obtained from almost every window of the towns, and from the heights above them, one can hardly anywhere approach its shores, the sea border being invaded either by the long line of imperial palaces from Top-hané to Beschichtach, by barracks, arsenals, and other public buildings, or, finally, by long lines of straggling, dingy villages, which stretch on the European side as far as Arnaut Keui or Bebek, on the opposite shore as far as Beylerbey and Candilly. The Bosphorus, as the guide books tell us, is a channel formed by seven headlands, sloping down to the water's edge on the European side, and projecting towards as many bays on the Asiatic side; and there are, again, seven promontories on the side of Asia, confronting as many little gulfs on the side of Europe; the sea running like a river between the two banks, the projections of which are indented, and, as it were, dovetailed into each other, so as to obstruct and diversify the views at every step, as one winds up from reach to reach, and from end to end. Upon leaving the southern entrance at Constantinople, where the three cities, the open Sea of Marmora, the Prince's Isles, and the Asiatic mountains present a unique panorama, the channel at once contracts itself between Ortaköy and Beylerbey, and reaches its narrowest point between Bebek and Candilly, near the spot where Mahomet II. built his two castles of Roumeli and Anatoli Hissar, facing one another on the two opposite hillsides, about half-way between the two seas. The strait widens again between Stenia and Kanluya, the Bay of Beikos and that of Buyukdere expanding into a lake, apparently closed in on all sides, at the end of which the channel proceeds in a straight northerly direction, allowing a view of its opening into the Black Sea between two other castles, the Roumeli and Anatoli Kawaghs, and the two lighthouses, Roumeli and Anatoli Fanars.

The rugged nature of the two coasts and the facilities afforded by the water carriage have hitherto prevented the construction of good communication along-shore. A railway on the European side, though often projected, has never been attempted, and the only tolerable carriage road from Pera to Buyukdere, achieved under European influence, has been made across the hills, *via* Maslak, traversing a bleak and dreary region for a long track, unrelieved by any view of the strait; another road, longer and more circuitous, but more interesting, comes up from Stamboul and Pera to the Sweet Waters Valley, and thence strikes across Burgas and the Forest of Belgrade to Buyukdere. Along-

shore, from village to village, tracts of good road close to the water's edge are to be met with. From Therapia to Buyukdere on the left, and to Yeniköy on the right, one can have a short but pleasant walk or ride, or drive, with an unobstructed view; while in the rear of these diplomatic villages bridle-paths are open to equestrians in every direction. On the Asiatic side, ways and bye-ways are even in a more imperfect condition, and the beauties of the country, which equal, to say the least, those of our own side, are less easily accessible.

Viewed from the water, either from the decks of the crowded steamers, or from the soft cushions at the bottom of the luxurious caïques, the shores on either side present a series of picturesque, lake-like landscapes, combining every imaginable variety of pleasing scenery. The hills are nowhere very lofty, the Giants' Mountain itself, opposite to Buyukdere, the culminating point, hardly, I should think, exceeding 800 feet. Those hills also are, as a rule, bare and desolate at the summits, and only here and there broken into bold crags and ravines on the slopes. Near the water-edge and in the bosom of the little valleys the vegetation is deep and luxuriant; but the eye wearies with that incessant succession of crowded habitations, those long rows of squalid wooden tenements of poor villages, hardly relieved by dwellings of higher pretensions, stately but inelegant villas of well-to-do Greeks and Armenians, also mostly of wood—"pasteboard houses," as they are called, flimsy and tawdry, in the very worst style of barbarous architecture, with here and there a sultan's palace or kiosque, the *yali* of an ex-grand vizier, an ambassador's palace, a mosque with its minaret, or a sacred edifice hallowed by a stone cross on its steeple. Silence, but not solitude, reigns on the Bosphorus. It is one of the great highways of all nations. The dove-like sailing yacht, the brown-canvassed fishing smack, the frail caïque, are perpetually thrust aside and tossed about in the wake of the puffing steamer as it breasts the tide, either bent on its distant cruise, or plying from pier to pier to lay its live freight at the various landing-places, where the bustling and jostling are almost as great as in the main street of Pera; and, withal, there is only animation without gaiety. Many of the stations are Turkish villages; houses with blank fronts, with jealously-latticed windows, no sign of life at the rigidly closed doors, hardly anywhere the sight of children playing in the gardens; no woman's face or shape, and only bundles of clothes, with muffled chins and noses, trooping up and down the piers where the steamer stops, waddling like scared geese, hurriedly but clumsily, on their broad, down-at-heel slippers or heavy man's boots. The Turk, however, though still present, is far nowadays from having the Bosphorus all to himself. In mixed villages, or where the population is mostly Christian, and the people of the lower orders are to be seen "fraternizing" with the Moslems, the eye is gladdened here and there by the sight of a pretty face; the large, weird eyes of the lovely Greek, the rich complexion and full round form of the fair Armenian, court your attention, as the beauty sits, in the morning, half hid by the thin, partly drawn blinds of her casement, coy and demure, always pretending to shrink from your too eager gaze, yet always lingering there, insatiable of men's admiration; or on Sundays, at mass time, as she comes out to test the

power of her charms, enhanced by the display of her sightly, though somewhat "loud," Frenchified finery. And again, in more favoured spots, such as Buyukdere, where the broad quay has room for a fashionable promenade, there is social intercourse in the evening at every house-door, the ladies gathering under their porticoes with tea and cards and harmless gossip, the gentlemen going round from group to group to give zest to the talk, in which corrupt Greek, bastard French, and Italian lingua-Franca are blended or jumbled together in not unpleasing confusion.

Between Therapia and Buyukdere, round the bay, there is a distance of about three miles. Not only are most of the embassies—the English, French, and Italian at Therapia, the Russian, German, and Greek at Buyukdere—now rusticated within this small compass, but consuls and judges, and bankers and merchants, of higher or lower degree, have here their summer homes, and constitute a little Frank colony, swelled at frequent periods by European visitors, quartered at the various hotels, and especially at Madame Petala's Hôtel d'Angleterre, a house of accommodation with an English landlady, combining many of the comforts with all the cleanliness and tidiness of a first-rate English establishment of the same description. Here or hereabouts a stranger will find plenty of good people to help him kill time; companions for a stroll along shore or for a longer walk, or for a ride into the forest of Belgrade, when he will soon find how necessary it is to go a little inland, and away from the shores of the Bosphorus, before its real beauties can be fully appreciated. In the rear of the bay, halfway between Therapia and Buyukdere, there lies a rich valley, crossed in all its length by a broad avenue lined with trees, and shut in on both sides by woody knolls, with as much cultivation between their slopes and in the intervening flats as one may chance to see anywhere in backward Turkey. This is the road to Belgrade; and about three miles inland, where a magnificent aqueduct crosses the way, you advance in the midst of the glorious forest, and go through it three miles farther to the village from which the forest itself takes its name. Such marvellously beautiful woodland scenery, such dense masses of rich blooming foliage, such wide sweeps of glorious uplands as are to be beheld here at this season, I can hardly say that I ever saw before, though I have rambled over many of the lordly parks of which England is justly proud, and though many months have not elapsed since I visited Vallombrosa and others of the few forestal recesses that have as yet escaped the axe in the Apennines. From the heights of Belgrade the streams to which that primeval verdure imparts whatever moisture and freshness are still to be enjoyed in this region branch out in every direction, some of them flowing down to the channel, some to the Black Sea, and two of them to the Golden Horn, forming those Sweet Waters of Europe which contribute the main element of enjoyment to the denizens of Pera and Stamboul. On both sides of the main avenue, as you advance, there open before you wide paths, canopied by the trees like galleries, cool and moist, and, indeed, damp and chilly as cellars in the hottest hours, where you can wander and be lost for hours and hours, allowing your steed to carry you by devious ways either back to Therapia, Buyukdere, or any point on the strait, or away to Kilias or some village on the Black Sea coast, or, finally, down into some of

the glens converging upon the Sweet Water Valley. Soft galloping grounds, steep stony paths, broad, open glades, and intricate thickets, testing the strength and skill of your sure-footed nag, are to be had at discretion; nor is the excitement of some little perilous adventure wanting; for, although the scanty population of the forests is inoffensive and by no means unfriendly, there rove in these woods, here and there, people of doubtful character—runaway malefactors, deserters from the army, and ne'er-do-well Croat or Montenegrin labourers—a meeting with whom would not always be pleasant unless you were one of a large party, or unless you had a ponderous six-shooter at your holster, or a pair of dainty Derringers in your waistcoat pockets, as well as a stout determination in your heart to use those weapons, and eke your loaded horsewhip, in defence of your beloved god watch and chain.

Table Talk.

THE early part of the debate on Sir Wilfrid Lawson's Permissive Bill was so dry, that out of the thirty members, all told, one kept sliding out now and then, evidently in the direction of the refreshment-room—what time, in opposition to the measure, Mr. Wheelhouse kept on quietly gurgling for above an hour, like some great bottle. "Good—good—good" was the burden of the honourable member's cry; and all the while opposite sat Sir Wilfred Lawson like a cork—light, buoyant, and longing to stop the gurgling bottle across the House—a cork, however, that was wired down by the Parliamentary law.

Perhaps as pleasant an entertainment as was ever given, inside or outside the City of London, was that of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Gordon, at the "Holborn," where some six or seven hundred guests, numbering amongst them many notabilities, met at a concert and ball. The scene was almost fairy-like in its beauty; for the magnificent *salle*, with its brilliant decorations, was turned for the time being into a perfect *parterre* of real flowers, mingled with which were massive blocks of ice, especially round the marble fountain. Madame Patey, Mr. Vernon Rigby, Mr. Lester, Mr. Patey, and Mr. Chaplin Henry were amongst the singers; while the dancing was to the music of the excellent band. In spite of the number of guests, arrangements were made in the various *salles* to seat all at supper—a meal which was really a magnificent banquet, such as put many of the civic festivities to the blush. A more elegant ball-room than that at the "Holborn," with its brilliant chandeliers, galleries, and tasty decorations, could hardly be imagined; and it was no cause for surprise that the dancing was kept up till daybreak. The present was a fresh experiment. Previously, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon have given their annual party at Crosby Hall.

TERPSICHOREAN.—Middle-aged gentlemen who can recall their early dancing-days may recollect the period when the "Annen Polka" was popular. It is said that this music will shortly be revived at Prince's, and places where they rink; but that, out of respect to a certain eminent judge who has recently made very complimentary remarks on the present state of society, it will be rechristened the "Hannen Polka."

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER LII.—THREE MONTHS AFTER.

"WHY did you come, Humphrey? Why did you hunt me out?" cried Richard, in answer to a speech made by the broad-shouldered West-countryman, who had been ushered in by Mrs. Fiddison.

"Because I wanted to see you, Master Dick. I've written, and you won't answer; so I got Mr. Pratt there to tell me where you were, and here I am."

Richard stood frowning for a few moments; but there was something so bright and frank in the face before him that a sunshiny look came in his own, and he shook hands heartily.

"Come, sir, that does one good," cried Humphrey. "I am glad I've come."

"Well, I am glad to see you, Humphrey; but yet—"

"I know, sir—I know," said Humphrey. "I could tell you exactly what you feel—a bit of envy-like; but there, bless your heart, if it wasn't for Polly and the thoughts of her, I should be a miserable man."

"Well, you've got plenty to make you miserable," said Richard.

"Ah, you may smile, sir—I know what you mean; but I have, all the same. I tell you, I was a deal happier man without the estate than I am with it. Old Lloyd and Mrs. Lloyd—begging your pardon for speaking so of them—look sneering-like at me; so do the quality; hang them, they're civil enough, but I can see them sneer. They look down on me, of course. I'm not one of their sort. I'm ignorant, and can't talk to them. I get on well enough with the young fellows, shooting, and so on; but I always feel as if I ought to load their guns, and I can't help saying 'sir' to every one of them."

"But I thought Mr. Mervyn—"

"Mr. Mervyn's as good and kind a gentleman as ever lived, and he's wanted to learn me all sorts of things; but I can't take to them—I can't, indeed, sir. Then there's Polly: she's at a fine school, and, poor lass, she's miserable, and writes to me how glad she'll be to get away. It's all wrong, sir. What's the good of a horse to a man as can't ride, or a yacht to a man as can't sail it? I've got Penreife, and I go in and out of it feeling quite ashamed-like, just as if I was a fish out of water. I tell you, Master Dick, upon my siddy, what with feeling uncomfortable about ousting you, and being sneered at on the sly, and bothered with the company and invitations, and hints to dress different, and learn this, and learn that, I haven't had a happy day since you left. I don't like it, and I don't want it. Damn the estate!—there!"

"Why, my dear fellow, you'll soon get used to it if you make up your mind. Why, you're in your old bailiff's clothes."

"Of course I am. Why shouldn't I be? There's no one up here I know, so I thought I'd be comfortable-like, and I thought—I thought I should be better in them to come and see you. And now, sir, how's it with you?"

"Oh, pretty well, Humphrey. I've got the command of a schooner, and I'm going on a voyage to India."

"No, no—don't go, Master Dick—don't. Come down into Cornwall again."

Richard shook his head.

"Nonsense, sir; why, lookye here. Here am I, Humphrey Lloyd—"

"Trevor," said Richard.

"Hang the name!" said Humphrey, "it's always bothering me. I more often sign Lloyd than Trevor, which is about the awkwardest name there ever was to write. Ah, Master Dick, it was a bad day's work for me when there was that change."

"Nonsense, man."

"Ah, but it was; and I tell you what: if it wasn't for my darling little lassie, I should take to drinking to drown my cares. But, look here, Master Richard—they wanted me to take that name, too—Richard—but I wouldn't stand that. Well, look here, sir, why don't you come down, and put your foot in the old place again? What's being born got to do with it? We couldn't help being born; we didn't want to be, I dessay; and we couldn't help what they did with us in our cradles."

"Of course not, Humphrey."

"Well, look here, sir; you grew into a gentleman, I grew into a common man. Well, then, what's stupider than trying to make me what I didn't grow into, and you into a common man? It's rubbish: we're neither of us no good as we are."

Richard laughed—rather bitterly, though.

"Polly and I have had it all over, sir. I went down to her school-place, poor little lass. She's very unhappy, and we came to the conclusion that with the cottage nicely papered and painted, and a hundred a year, we should be as happy as the day's long. So come, Master Richard—there's the place nohow for want of you. Come down, and take possession."

"Humphrey, if ever there was a fellow born with the soul of a gentleman, it's you. But no; there is such a thing in a man as pride, and I have too much to accept your offer; and, besides, I've made an engagement."

"Not to be married, sir?"

"No, no; my ship, man, my ship."

"Oh!" said Humphrey; "because I was thinking, sir. There's Miss Rea, you know."

"What about her?" said Richard, sharply.

"Oh, only that she's down at Tolcarne now, sir. They say she's been better lately. There was some talk about her being engaged to an officer—that captain, sir, as come down and stayed with us—you, I mean—but they say that's all broken off, because he was married already. His wife fetched him, and he's gone off in a regiment to India."

Richard remained silent.

"Well, come—look here, Master Dick, you say you won't take the place back?"

"Certainly not."

"Then let's go halves."

"Humphrey, it is yours by right; keep it," said Richard, decisively.

"Well, come then, sir, we were boys together, you won't refuse to do your old companion a good turn?"

"Anything consistent that you ask me to do, Humphrey, I'll do with pleasure."

"Then come down and be my best man at my wedding."

Richard hesitated, for there was a battle going on within his breast. He longed—longed intensely to go down and see Cornwall again. Tiny Rea was there—he might see her. Yes, and make himself more wretched than ever, for he could not speak to her. It would be madness to go—and yet once—to see the old place before he left England—just for a few hours. And why should he not see Tiny, just to tell her of his unaltered faith? He felt that he would give the world to go, and yet pride kept him back.

"All right—I'll walk in, Mrs. Fiddison," said a voice, and Frank Pratt entered. "Well, Dick, old man, how are you? Ah, Humphrey, I told you I should turn up some time."

"I'm trying to get Master Dick here, sir, to come down and be my best man at the wedding."

"Well, he'll do that for you, surely," said Pratt, quietly. "Go down, Dick. I've promised Humphrey to go. I said I would directly he asked."

Pratt looked very solemn over it; but there was tremendous exultation in his heart as he thought of seeing Fin, for the family had left Russell-square directly after the unpleasant *eclaircissement*.

"He'll come, Humphrey. There, I'll promise for him, and so you may make your mind happy."

"But just say you will, Master Dick," said Humphrey, rising.

"Well, I will, Humphrey," said Richard, holding out his hand, though he repented the next moment, as his successor took his leave.

"Seen Mrs. Vanleigh lately?" said Pratt, as soon as they were alone.

"Poor woman! no, not for two days. I must call."

"Van's behaving very well now that it's too late. There's a regular allowance for her at his army agent's. I didn't believe a man could have changed so as he did. It was that fever did it, coming upon the shock. Poor wretch! I never saw a man so stricken down as he was at that poor girl's funeral."

He caught Richard's eye.

"There, what a blundering ass I am, Dick, old man. It's my trade to rout out all sorts of old sores. But, mum, I won't say any more. How's our friend the cabby?"

"Oh, quite well!"

"And madame?"

"Excellently well. They say that perhaps Mrs. Vanleigh is coming to stay with them again; but I don't think it would be wise for the poor woman to do so."

"Quite right," said Pratt. "Well, I must be off and work. I've got an Indian case on—Jeetee Rustam v. Tomkins, and two or three more things to get out of the way before I go down to Cornwall. By the way, I met our languid friend, Flick, at the club yesterday."

"Well?"

"He cut me, sir. Looked bayonets, lance-points, and sabres at me. Heigho! Well, we can't all win. Ta-ta."

"Good-bye."

"Cornwall, mind."

Richard nodded, and he was left alone, to make up his mind a dozen times that he could not go down to the old place without a great sacrifice of dignity, and as often something seemed to whisper him that he

must go; and to that faint whisper he lent an attentive ear, for the desire grew so strong at last that he found himself unable to resist.

CHAPTER LIII.—A FELLOW-TRAVELLER.

"I DON'T mind telling you now," said Frank Pratt, sitting back in the railway carriage, with his hands under his head, and great puffs of smoke issuing from between his lips as he stared at Richard, who was gazing quietly at the pleasant Devon prospect past which they flew.

"Don't mind telling me what?" said Richard, dreamily.

"That I never expected to get you down here. Dick, old man, I've felt like a steam tug fussing about a big ship these last few days. However, I've got you out of dock at last."

"Yes," said Richard, dreamily, "you've got me out of dock at last."

They relapsed into silence for a time, Pratt sitting watching his friend, and noting more than ever the change that had come over him during the last few months. There were lines in his forehead that did not exist before, and a look of staid, settled melancholy, very different from the calm, insouciant air that used to pervade his countenance.

"Poor old Dick," muttered Pratt, laying down his pipe; "I mustn't let him look like this." Then aloud, "Dick, old boy, I'm going to preach to you."

Richard turned to him with a sad smile.

"Go on, then," he said.

"I will," said Pratt. "Never mind the text or the sequence of what I say. I only wanted to talk to you, old fellow, about life."

"I was just then thinking about death," said Richard, quietly.

"About death?"

"I was visiting in spirit the little corner at Highgate where that poor girl lies, and thinking of a wish she expressed."

"What was that?"

Richard shook his head, and they were silent as the train rushed on.

"Life is a strange mystery, Dick," said Pratt at last, laying his hand on his friend's knee; "and I know it is giving you great pain to come down here and see others happy. It is to give them pleasure you are coming down?"

Richard nodded.

"Last time we were down here together, Dick, I was one of the most miserable little beggars under the sun. I don't mind owning it now."

His friend grew more attentive.

"You were happy then, old fellow, and very hard you tried to make others so too, but I was miserable."

"Why?"

"Because I was poor—a perfect beggar, without a prospect of rising, and I had found out that in this queer little body of mine there was a very soft heart. Dick, old boy, the wheel of fortune has given a strange turn since then. I've gone up and you've gone down, and—'pon my soul, old fellow, I'm very very sorry."

"Nonsense, Franky," said Richard, speaking cheerfully. "If ever a man was glad, I am, at your prosperity. But you don't look so very cheerful, after all."

"How can I?" said Frank, dolefully, "with you on my mind for one thing, and the lion's mouth gaping for my unlucky head."

"Lion's mouth?"

"Yes, Dick; I'm going to Tolcarne to pop my head in; and, to make matters worse, there's a horrible, sphinxy griffin sits and guards the lion's den."

"You mean that you are going to propose for little Fin?"

"I am, Dick, I am," said Pratt, excitedly. "I wouldn't have said a word if I had kept poor, but with my rising income—"

"And some one's permission?"

"Bless her, yes; she says she hates me, and always shall, till her sister's happy; but I may ask papa, so as to get rid of poor Flick and his persecutions. I believe the poor chap cares for her; but I can't afford to let him have her, and make her miserable—eh, Dick?"

"Frank, old fellow, I wish you joy, and I'm glad of it, for she's a dear little girl."

"Ah, that don't express it within a hundred," said Pratt. "Dear little girl! That's the smallest of small beer, while she's the finest vintage of champagne. But, I say, Dick, old fellow, you've got to help me over this."

"I? How?"

"She says she shall hate me till her sister's happy; and Dick, old fellow, there's only one way of making Valentina Rea happy, and that you know. There—there—I've done. Don't look at me like that. Fortune's wheel keeps turning on: I shall be down in the mud again soon, and you cock-a-hoop on the top. Do you stick to your purpose of not going on to-night?"

"Yes, I shall go on in the morning from Plymouth, be present at the wedding, and then come away."

"But you'll go and see the old people? Dick, recollect Mrs. Lloyd did all out of love and pride in her boy."

"Yes, I had made up my mind to go and see them," said Richard, quietly. "I'll try and be a dutiful son."

"And if I can manage it, you shall be a dutiful friend and brother-in-law too, my boy," muttered Pratt, as he sank back in his seat, relit his pipe, and smoked in peace.

Plymouth platform was in a state of bustle on the arrival of the train. The friends had alighted from their coupé, inquired about the early morning train for Penzance, pointed out their light luggage to an obsequious porter, whose words buzzed with z's, and were about to make their way to the great hotel, when Pratt's attention was taken by a little grey, voluble old woman, very neatly and primly dressed in blue print, with a scarlet shawl, and a wonderful sugar-loaf beaver hat upon her head. She was in trouble about her railway ticket, two bundles tied up in blue handkerchiefs, and a large, green umbrella.

"I can't find it, young man; I teclare to cootness, look you, I can't find it."

"Very sorry, ma'am," said the ticket collector, who had followed her from the regular platform; "then you'll have to pay from Bristol."

"But look you," cried the old lady, "I tid pay once, and cot the ticket, look you, and I put it somewhere to be safe."

"Have you searched all your pockets?" said Richard.

"Yes, young man," said the old lady; "I've only cot

one, look you—there!" and she dragged up her dress to display a great olive green pocket as big as a saddle bag, out of which, after placing a bundle in Pratt's hands and the umbrella in Richard's to hold, she turned out a heterogeneous assortment of nutmegs, thimbles, reels of cotton, pieces of wax candle, ginger, a bodkin case, pincushions, housewives, and, as the auctioneers say, other articles too numerous to mention.

"It don't seem to be there," said Richard, kindly.

"No, young man, it isn't. I hunted it all over, look you, and I must have been robbed."

"Well, ma'am, I am very sorry," said the collector; "but you must pay again."

"I teclare to cootness, young man, I can't, and I won't. I shall have no money to come back."

"Can't help that," said the collector, civilly enough.

"I must do my duty, ma'am."

"How much is it?" said Richard.

"From Bristol, third class, sir, eight and tenpence."

"Look you, young man, I shall be ruined," cried the old woman, tearfully.

"I'll pay it," said Richard, thrusting his hand into his pocket.

"You're a tear, coot boy, pless you," cried the old lady; and to the amusement of all on the platform, she went on tiptoe, reached up to Richard, and gave him a sounding kiss. "Pless you for it. Coot deeds are never thrown away."

"I hope you are a witch, Mother Hubbard," said Pratt, laughing. "Here's your bundle. Don't forget to do him a good turn."

Richard took out the money, and the collector was about to write a receipt, when it suddenly occurred to the young man to open the umbrella, which he did with some difficulty, and the missing ticket fell out.

"There," cried the old lady, joyfully, "I knew I put it somewhere to be safe. Thank you, young man, and pless you all the same; for, look you, it was as coot a deed as if you had done it."

"Don't say any more, mother," said Richard, laughing. "Good-bye."

HOPELESS IGNORANCE.—Braham, the vocalist, once advised a friend to give his son, a youth of promise, an excellent education, which advice was followed. Meeting his friend, who had not himself academic culture, two or three years afterwards, the singer inquired if the scholar's progress was satisfactory. "Judge for yourself, Mr. Braham; read that letter of his. I have lost all hope in the boy. You know I have spent oceans of money on his education, and yet you will see by his letter that he spells shugar without a *h*."

A PLAGUE of rats has been lately ravaging the French camp at Rocquencourt. These rats have increased with such rapidity as to form a veritable army, daring and cunning, and fearing neither light nor noise. Every morning some unfortunate soldier finds either the harness of his horse gnawed into morsels, or discovers the buttons left as the sole relics of his trousers. To keep their bread safe for breakfast, the troopers are obliged during the night to hang their loaves over their beds by a string, and are then often awakened by the bread falling on them, a rat having gnawed the cord in two. A price is set on the head of each single rat, but the depredators give battle, generally successfully, to the fiercest dogs.

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER XVI.—QUEER PEOPLE.

IT is not in the higher circles that the most lavish display is found. Rank has no occasion to assert itself—it is sure of its proper recognition; while the very wealthy are content with modest outlay, so long as it is consistent with the sphere in which they move. But there is a class in society at once ambitious and uncertain of position, at once affluent and vulgar; and this is the class which relies solely on ostentatious outlay and ill-regulated splendour.

Thus it did not follow that the people who occupied the biggest house in Regent's Park were the "best" people in that neighbourhood. They had more house, a grander porch, and a steeper flight of steps than anybody else; their equipages were more showy, their servants more numerous, and their style of living more imposing than that of their neighbours, but somehow it did not produce more effect.

Even the tradesmen who profited by their extravagance spoke superciliously of the Dormer-Pagets, as it was their pleasure to call themselves.

The more vulgar among them had been known to speak slightly of the family as being a "queer lot," and the term, though vague, was expressive.

It is possible, however, that the "queer lot" were unconscious of this criticism, and they certainly were indifferent to it. They lived in a round of pleasure, were always visiting or receiving visitors—always driving out, driving home, dressing for company, mixing in company, and sleeping off the effects of this whirlwind of a life. So they had no time to listen to anything, or to reflect about anything; but went straight ahead, right away, as if enjoyment were the great business of life, and it was necessary to amass as much as possible of it before receiving that last party of friends who would escort them to the churchyard.

One of the advantages connected with the Dormer-Paget set was that it was always "the season" in town with them. They gave their parties all the year round, and people, plenty of people, were always glad to come, to fill their rooms, and to be made jolly and comfortable. For Dormer-Paget House was one of the few places in which people could be jolly, and it was their own fault if they did not enjoy themselves.

The rooms were magnificent—especially when lit up for company, as they were one night about this time—and the first sight of them seldom failed to elicit exclamations of astonishment.

As a general effect, they produced on the mind a sense of unlimited rose-coloured satin, heightened with gold. The hangings were all of the richest colour and of the costliest texture. And those portions of the walls not hung with this superb drapery were all of silvered plate glass, so that each room reflected itself in the rooms beyond it, and those in turn in other rooms, until the sensation realized was one of overwhelming splendour and illimitable space. Strewn roses—as large as cabbages—formed the idea of the carpets. The articles of furniture were scattered about in studied disorder, and the entire effect was gorgeous and voluptuous in the extreme.

When, as on this night, the rooms were superbly lit,

they dazzled and charmed. By daylight it is possible that trifling defects might have arrested attention. There was an absence of womanly carefulness, and of those minute touches which indicate loving thoughtfulness. There was something more. There were signs of revelry which spoke of orgies. Wine stains splashed the rose tabaret of chairs. There were great rents in the rich hangings, tassels had been wrenched off, the brackets of candelabra were wanting, arms of chairs were fractured, and there was a prevalent want of wholeness which told its tale.

Night hid all this, not in darkness, but by excess of light. And those who filled the rooms cared little for these things. They were a joyous company—women over-dressed and men over-fed. Great, stalwart fellows, loud, and red, and horsey, frequenters of races and familiar with less reputable haunts, sprawled on the couches. Turbulent women, broad of face, gigantic in bust, and coarse alike in manner and attire (sumptuous as the latter was), laughed and drank—laughed loud and drank deep.

Youth, of course, found itself represented, and beauty lent a charm to the scene; but not too much of it. The Dormer-Paget circle was not a congenial one for either; and it was quite as well, for beauty brought within its influence was apt to grow prematurely coarse and bloated, and the innocence of youth went off as the bloom of the plum is lost by handling.

The bloom of beauty and of youth alike had long since departed from the central figure of the group assembled on this night; for, numerous as the company was, it had a central figure, and one that would have been conspicuous in any assembly.

All agreed that Mrs. Dormer-Paget was a superb creature. It did not matter that she had passed the Rubicon of youth; that which would have been fatal to many women seemed only to add to her attractions. Her commanding height demanded that development of form which accompanies the full ripeness of womanhood. That head so proudly borne, and crowned with such a wealth of blue-black hair, was in keeping with the matured splendour of her form. Something regal—indicated alike in the fierce light of her flashing eyes, in the imperial curl of her full lips, and in the splendour of her attire—won admiration and inspired awe. Men were charmed and abashed by her, and it was not surprising rumours were afloat which assigned to her two essentially different origins: one scandal represented her as descended through some obscure channel from the House of Hapsburg, and another declared that she was merely the daughter of a renowned lion-tamer who had been killed while exhibiting before the Austrian Court. Either tale accounted in some degree for the indescribable magnificence of her personal charms and fiercely courageous bearing. Whether derived from an imperial or plebeian source, it was no craven blood that flowed in the veins of Margaret Dormer-Paget.

In other society it might have been thought odd that no one should know exactly who the lady was, or how she came to have married the gentleman who had the happiness of being called her husband—for in his absence the wife was always named first; but then in the Dormer-Paget circle people did not institute minute inquiries into each other's antecedents. And it was quite as well that they did not.

Of the husband in question, it will be enough to say

that he was enormously rich; had a nose like a parrot's beak; dressed with extreme primness; betted heavily on horses, and almost invariably won; was fond of cards, and never lost; had no vices except a weakness for snuff; and gloried in the possession of his wife, as he would have done in that of some picture of world-wide celebrity, which everybody might admire and he alone could call his own.

There was no point of resemblance between husband and wife stronger than there might have been between a gorgeous Rubens, and the prim City man who might happen to buy it.

In this assembly the two had distinct parts assigned to them. The lady talked, fascinated, and promoted the jollity of the drawing-rooms; her husband had his place in the card-rooms, and unobtrusively promoted play.

It was characteristic that alike in the drawing-rooms and in the card-rooms there was none of that abstemiousness which marks the upper circles. Men and women alike drank freely. Wines flowed like water. More than this, refreshments of a costly and by no means unsubstantial kind were incessantly handed round, while the prospect of supper at midnight was kept steadily in view.

They had no notion of ascetic delights or proprieties, these people. Their jollity took a substantial form. They were full-blooded by reason of the good things of this life; gay with the gaiety famous vintages lent them; reckless with the recklessness of ardent spirits; loud with the loudness of habitual licence and unrestrained indulgence.

It was near midnight, and the hostess was seated near the fire in the principal drawing-room, engaged in entering a bet in connection with the Cesarewitch in a substantial betting-book, which contrasted strangely, from its bulk and businesslike aspect, with the splendour of the scene, when a curious incident occurred.

"A hundred to one against Titmouse," she had just written, and was reading over.

"Right," said a gentleman in a moustache descending six inches on either side of his mouth.

Then there was a pause, a commotion, a wondering.

The lady looked up as she clasped her betting-book, and a look of surprise came into her face also.

"I am afraid I have not the pleasure—" she began instinctively, then paused irresolutely.

She had not, she was about to say, the pleasure of knowing two people who had advanced, and now stood before her—a gentleman leading by the hand a young lady. The gentleman was tall, thin, with a foreign face, grizzled hair, and a beard which almost hid the shirt front with diamond studs which formed part of his evening dress.

A remarkable man this; but all eyes turned from him to his companion. The young girl was of a rare beauty; fresh and fragrant as a rose, with a cataract of bright hair about her, from which her face looked, like the face of an angel from a cloud bright in the sunset. The dress of this sweet girl was quite as remarkable as her personal appearance. Though she could not have been more than sixteen, there was no want of superfluity in her attire; it consisted of the costliest lace, and a diamond blazed in the midst of the rope of pearls which encircled her neck.

The stranger was in the act of presenting the young

girl with a profound obeisance, when Mrs. Dormer-Paget began to speak; before she had concluded he looked up, and they stood face to face.

"It is not Marco?" she exclaimed, with a degree of amazement which, for the moment, disturbed her equanimity.

"Who else?" was the reply.

"And this child?"

"My daughter. Permit me to introduce her, my darling Zerina."

"So glad to see you, dear!"

The charming girl clasped the extended hand of the hostess, and pressed it to her lips in a manner at once dramatic and natural. The proud beauty gazed at her with undisguised admiration, and it was clear that on the other hand Zerina was awed, impressed, and overwhelmed with the lady, and with the scene in the midst of which she found herself.

"You have given me a delightful surprise, Marco," said Mrs. Dormer-Paget, as soon as she could recover her composure—by the way, her delight was not very strongly expressed. "I was not aware that you knew of my existence. It is so many years since we lost sight of each other, and that in a foreign part; and since then so much has happened. Why, I was but a girl then, scarce older than your daughter here, and now—"

"You are a woman—the loveliest in England."

"Marco—Marco!" she returned, "when will you leave off your foreign tricks of speech? It is not the mode to flatter here in England."

"Pardon me," was his answer, "admiration must find expression all over the world."

The haughty woman was pleased, but did not choose to show it.

"You have not answered my question," she said. "How came you to find out that I existed, and where I existed?"

"The world is not so large," Marco answered, "that beauty like yours could long remain hidden in it."

"And pray, how long have you found out my retreat?"

"Since you have been in England."

"And you have never called, never written!"

"I would not venture to intrude on your circle till I felt that my daughter was old enough to enter it. 'Then,' I said to myself, 'I will claim the privilege of an old friend. I shall find Margaret'—it was by that name I have dared to call you in my thoughts; the name of the old days—'I shall find her, and throw myself upon her good and generous heart. I will say to her, 'See, here is my child, my Zerina; she is motherless, pure and spotless, yet with no one to guide, to advise, to fit her for the world. Come, you shall remember old times, and shall be a mother to her. You shall introduce her to your circle—she will be no unworthy ornament to it—and shall teach her to become what you yourself are—a woman of the world, a leader of society, the bright centre of a great social circle. You will receive her, will you not, into your circle, and will treat her as if she were your own child?' This is what," I said to myself, "I will do when the time comes." That time has come, and I bring her to you to-night."

It was a study to watch the face of the woman to whom these words were addressed, while she listened to them.

Astonishment was succeeded by incredulity. Indignation flushed her face as allusion was made to her

presumed position as a leader of society; and this in turn gave place to pity, if not contempt, as she assured herself, or thought she assured herself, that the man was in earnest, and was asking all he did ask in simple good faith. A gleam of satisfaction succeeded to all other feelings as Marco concluded; yet it was clear that she still had her misgivings.

"Do you mean this?" she asked, pointedly.

"Mean it? Why not?"

She laughed. It was rarely that she laughed, and then seldom from pleasurable emotions; generally to imply more than words could readily do.

Marco ought to have understood that—perhaps did so; but his face remained a blank.

"You had not always so much confidence in me?" she said.

"Pshaw! You were a girl then, I was a boy. What have those old times to do with it?"

"Well, little perhaps; but I was fickle and you were hard. I did not treat you well, and your anger was terrible. It frightened me. I have woke up in terror at the thought of it many a night. But, as you say, we were so young."

"Of course, of course; all that is changed, and now, you see, I give you the firmest proof of my confidence. I ask you to take my daughter to your heart, and be all that you can be to the poor, motherless child."

Why did she hesitate?

Already her hand clasped that of the beautiful girl; yet she did not draw her towards her. Why?

In truth, a misgiving lay cold at her heart. A warning voice rang in her ears. The very blankness on the face of the Italian deterred her, seeing what far other expression might have been there at such a moment. She had it on her lips to say, "No, Marco, no; I dare not." But her pride kept down the words. A strange presentiment—an inexplicable feeling, the nature of which she could not define—held her back; but she would not be outdone in confidence and generosity.

"I will do what you ask, Marco," she said.

And she clasped Zerina to her breast.

In the act of doing so with her right hand, she held out her left hand to Marco. He took it, but the hand he offered was so icy cold, so marble-like, that a shudder went over the haughty woman's frame; and it was communicated to the slight form she held in her embrace.

There ensued a moment of dead silence.

It was one of those pauses, felt twice or thrice in a lifetime, it may be, which attend the turning of fresh pages in the book of Destiny.

The page was turned when the lady impressed a kiss on the blooming cheek of the young girl, and bade her welcome then and always.

That night Zerina never forgot. It was so bright, so gay, so joyous; in every way so striking a contrast to the old house by the river in which she had been pent up from childhood. Lost in wonder at the rooms, she had hardly time to note the people, or to understand the words addressed to her; words often free and bold, and calculated to call a blush to the cheek of all but one too innocent to be aware of the subtle poison which is the soul of such flowers of speech. At every turn she was the theme of admiration and comment. Of this she was aware, and it gave her the liveliest satisfaction; but she did not venture far from

Marco or from the hostess, feeling too unused to company to trust as yet to her own resources.

One thing was especially distasteful to her.

Whoever spoke invited her to take wine, pressed it upon her, and almost compelled her to partake.

Surely Marco must have seen this, yet he did not interfere; but, soon devoting himself to cards, appeared to forget for the most part that his daughter was present.

Not so Mrs. Dormer-Paget. Her eyes seldom wandered from the girl, and once when she saw her lifting a glass of sparkling Burgundy to her lips at the solicitation of one of the guests, she abruptly snatched it from her hands, and threw the contents into the fire.

The man who had offered it showed an angry face; but she only laughed.

"Time enough for that," she said.

"For what?" asked her husband, presenting himself for the first time, snuff-box in hand.

"See!" she exclaimed, parrying the question with a sudden outburst of gaiety, "see! I have had a present. You must promise to be very fond of my beautiful child."

Marco passed behind them at the moment. His face, deeply saturnine, was wrinkled with a sardonic smile.

Queer Cards.

CHAPTER X.—THE KNAVE OF HEARTS.

HE who had until now listened moodily, laid down his pipe, took a deep draught at his beer, and began—

"You don't seem to have led particularly pleasant lives, either of you!"

The face of the Knave of Hearts, as he uttered these words, was not an agreeable face to look upon. It was a fierce, disdainful, disreputable face; and yet in some mysterious manner, and by some strange tokens, it was still the face of a gentleman.

The Knave of Diamonds, timidly enough, drew his chair nearer to him; the Knave of Spades, as the vowed servant of the other, drew nearer too, but with no signs of sympathy in his look or action. The Knave of Hearts took no notice of either; looked wistfully, wearily at the fire, and resumed:—

"If I tell my story, I don't do it with the view of getting any sympathy from either of you. I am past that. Sympathy, loathing, I care little or nothing now for either; but I want to talk. I would rather drink, but there's small comfort to be got from this muddy ale, and I cannot sit silent and endure.

"You meet me on the tramp. I am one of you now, as poor, as weary and worn as any of you. And yet I was a gentleman. I shall not tell you my name, I have disgraced it too deeply. There is an old country house in Warwickshire that has belonged to my race for centuries, but they would not recognize me there now. I have dragged down their honourable name into the mire of the London gutters. I need not mention it here, among this worshipful company. Let me call myself—any name will do—say Frank Edwards.

"I was on the tramp, too, early enough. I used to spend my long vacations, when I was at college, in sturdy tramps along the English roads, or over the Welsh hills, knapsack on back, sketch-book in hand.

Nevertheless, I read hard. I took honours at my college. Down at the old house in Warwickshire there was a widowed mother who was proud of me; there were little sisters who loved brother—well, well, say brother Frank.

"The girl to whom I was betrothed died suddenly when I was but twenty-one years of age. Returning to my home after a long tramp, my friends met me with grave, sorrowful looks; they told me she was dead; and ere a long time had passed they pressed me, with what I thought unfeeling haste, to engage myself to another.

"I grew weary alike of their decorous grief and of their tiresome solicitations. There must have been some gipsy blood in me, I sometimes fancied. Ere long I was out upon the road again. I wandered far and wide; the bitterness of my regret, the poignancy of my sorrow, gradually faded away; but they left in me an infinite craving for love, noble or ignoble, elevating or degrading, I cared not which, so that it was but honestly love.

"I remember—there is little hope that I shall ever forget it—the close of one long summer day's rambling. I had wandered away into the West country, and was now on the skirts of Dartmoor. The rough and ready life of the roads suited me well enough; if it did nothing else, it kept me, at least, from brooding on my grief.

"Tramp life! I know it as well as you. I have slept in barns before now, and been roused at the dead hour of the night by hearing a drunken tinker beating his wife, who took his blows quietly, striving only to shield the baby at her breast. I have seen miserable women halt, wretchedly, forlornly, midway between two towns, without a friend or a hope in either. I have seen, more than once, that last stern, final halt, when the swollen and blistered feet could go no farther; when the trouble and the toil drew to a close, not calm or gentle, but with numb chill pangs about it; when the heart, long unused either to joy or to hope, ceased its restless, aimless beatings, and was hushed at last into the grim and solemn serenity of Death.

"I had written to my friends at times. One and all, they had blamed my vagabond course of life, and implored me to quit it; their entreaties grew somewhat wearisome, my own heart was very wilful, and I ceased to write.

"On the summer day of which I speak, I had been long without food, and had grown faint and weary. My walk had led me through some of the most beautiful scenery in Devon, but I had scarcely heeded it. There seemed to be a cloud before my eyes. Nervous, feverish, parched at the throat, my sinews lax, my brain heated and confused, I walked towards the little village where I meant to pass the night.

"I can remember now how hushed and solemn was the day. I can remember now how the old church tower, ivy-covered, weather-stained, rose before me as I walked. I can remember how the brook that coursed down from the moorland seemed querulous in its voice—seemed complaining, accusing, repelling. I can remember the low, monotonous hum that rose from the village.

"The doors were half open, village gossips talked under the old elm tree in front of the inn, a few coil-

ing wreaths of smoke rose from the thatched cottages.

"As I stood upon the little bridge, a great and sudden faintness came upon me; strange sounds, as of bells from some unknown graveyard far away, rang dizzily in my ears; there was a strange dancing light in my eyes; there was a sickness at my very heart. Fainting, I sank upon the bridge.

"I was carried into the inn, the Plough, a different inn from this dreary hole—ugh! There were roses round it, and the scent of them came through the half-open window as I returned to consciousness.

"A lot of kindly village folks, who had seen me fall, had run to my assistance, and carried me into the inn. My brows had been bathed, my necktie loosened; good old housewives had done everything that their kind hearts and clear, steady, honest heads could suggest; and as I recovered I heard a gentle buzz and hum of kindly human voices murmuring round me.

"My fainting fit left me weak, but before the evening was over they had broiled me a fine fat fowl, and mixed me a good comforting glass of grog, and talked cheerily to me, and put me thoroughly at my ease, in body and mind. Specially, there was one nurse, not an old woman.

"I have travelled a good deal, look you; but a lovelier girl than—well, let me call her Lucy Ellacombe—I never saw. When I remember what she was then—when I remember what, under my influence, she became, my heart bleeds again, with the old acute, intimate sorrow.

"I cannot describe her to you; these lips of mine are not pure enough, this heart of mine has been too seared, and scathed, and polluted. She was a village rose. Heaven knows how I profaned her.

"Not intentionally, as He is my judge! Amidst my utter wretchedness, as I sit here to-night, broken-down, bankrupt, old before my time, I can find some comfort yet in the thought that I was no deliberate wrongdoer; but the path of sin is easy to tread, and difficult only to retrace.

"She was the village blacksmith's daughter. Her father, a manly, muscular fellow, had a fond heart in his rough frame, but a weak will. This village—Bartleigh, I will call it—was no Arcadia. At the Five Bells there were drunken choruses of an evening, not all of a pastoral character, and old Ellacombe was one of the noisiest of the pothouse crew. His wife, a shrewish little old woman, might perhaps have reclaimed him by kindness; but whenever he came home the worse for liquor, her shrill tongue ran on in voluble reproach, and her morning sulkiness drove him forth again to seek comfort among his old companions in his old haunt.

"Lucy was generally employed, during the day, in needlework at the vicarage; but her life was very sad, poor thing! She had been tolerably educated, but her reading had been of the worst kind, mere weak romances, exciting the imagination, and doing little else.

"I determined to stay in the little village for a week or two, until I recovered strength.

"Shall I go, step by step, through the whole sad history? My heart fails me. Let it suffice that idleness and romance soon led me to take an interest in this girl, which did not indeed amount to love, but which was more than the kindly feeling due from a

man in my position to a village girl who had nursed him. Then she was very lovely. As I talked with her, as her languid black eye lighted up, as her musical voice grew tremulous, new feelings stirred within me.

"I sketched a good deal. Taking lodgings at the inn, I generally sauntered away in the morning into the beautiful moorland country that lay around me. By-and-by, I sometimes met Lucy Ellacombe as I returned in the twilight. It is the old, old story. My heart was weary; I yearned for sympathy, for companionship, even for that of this girl. And she? Troubles came rapidly upon her. Her brother returned suddenly from sea. He was a wild, reckless fellow, and accustomed to drink deeply. Their home grew more and more wretched.

"One dark and misty evening, as father and son staggered out from the Five Bells, and rolled towards the cottage where Lucy and her mother sat waiting for them, the old man slipped in crossing the wooden bridge, and fell into the moorland stream. The son leapt in after him, and dragged him out; but it was too late. The old man's head had struck against a huge boulder; he was stunned, and never woke.

"I still lingered in the village; and every one in it went to old Ellacombe's funeral. The next day his son abruptly left his home.

"Why was I glad that he had gone? He had often been rude to me; had once or twice spoken roughly to Lucy in my presence; but he had a right to do so—I cannot blame him. I could not blame him even then.

"But I was glad that he had gone; and my interviews with Lucy grew more frequent. They began to excite attention. The villagers looked coldly on me. One day the vicar called.

"He was right to do so. It was his duty, as the shepherd of his homely flock, to see that not one of his lambs took harm or hurt; but I resented it.

"When he asked me whether I intended to stay there much longer, I answered him abruptly, almost rudely. My own folly led him to think worse of me than I deserved. Lucy Ellacombe ceased to be employed at the vicarage.

"I heard this from her mother's lips. Her mother implored me to go. I felt that it was the best course I could take. I resolved to make her a present that should cheer and help her through the coming winter, to say good-bye to Lucy, and then to leave the place.

"On what I intended to be my last day at Bartleigh, I wandered to my favourite nook. Passing through a gate by the roadside, you had but to follow a little path for a couple of hundred yards, and then, turning abruptly to the right, you would come upon as lovely a little spot as heart could wish.

"Thickly wooded, so that even amid the summer heat there was always coolness and shade, it was the very spot in which to loiter away a dreary noon. The woodland sloped down gently towards a little brook, whose sudden freaks and gambols and flashes of light I was never tired of watching. I had bent down a young sapling, so as to form a rustic seat. I sat on it this morning—moodily, sadly, conscious that I had been doing wrong, though conscious also that as yet I had committed no positive sin. I can say it still: my heart was not depraved.

"But, as I sat there, I heard a light step, and, turning, saw Lucy. She had followed me, it seemed; and

when her eyes met mine, I could see that they were red with weeping.

"Mother tells me you're going away, Mr. Edwards."

"That was all.

"It's a sad life, sir, is mine. The vicar has been harsh to me, and the neighbours look strange-like. Mother's old, and father's dead, and brother's gone to the sea; and, oh! Mr. Edwards, I do want some one to help me."

"She had nestled up towards me, timidly. Her words seemed strange and bold. They were not meant to be so—nay! the girl's heart was pure, that morning.

"But I clasped her to mine; and I could hear it beat as I clasped her. The rain of her tears was hot on my face; the dark tresses of her hair, disordered, fell about me.

"Don't ask me what I promised, or what I swore. I cannot tell you. I know that in the delirium of suddenly awakened passion I spoke swiftly, wildly; that, madly as I spoke, she listened more and more eagerly, yet crying bitterly all the while; and I know that, three days afterwards, I met her by appointment, a few miles out of the village, and took her with me to London."

Jumbo.

THERE are certain potentates in this little world of ours with whom, when we quarrel, we do not know whether to laugh or to be angry. If a diplomatic difficulty arises with the Emperor of Russia, as a matter of course people look serious; but when it is an African king, there is an absurdity about the whole affair that robs it of all importance. There are times, though, when the fly stings the bull too hard, and he grows angry. Twice lately we have had occasion to take the insults of African monarchs very seriously, and the result has been an Abyssinian and an Ashantee war. Saving the dangers to be apprehended from the great ally of these potentates, King Climate, the wars have been so petty and trivial that they have been unworthy of notice. Theodore was killed by a power whose proceedings resembled those of an elephant waging war upon a virulent flea; and the King of Ashantee was driven from his forest fastnesses with the greatest of ease, in spite of his followers being the bravest of the West Coast blacks, which is not saying much. And now, with his spirit stirred up by rum, the great King of Dahomey has boldly declared war against England.

The difficulty has been over some persecution of certain English merchants who have been carrying on trade in his well-mannered dominions; and the admiral on the district condemned his sable majesty in costs, and bade him, by an ambassage, to pay the money to her Majesty's representative.

This gnat of a king buzzed loudly on hearing the demand, and summoned his great men, councillors, and generals to a palaver, held in a snug corner, between mud walls, with a pleasant shade secured by a mat and bamboo roofing, supported on poles. Guns of an antiquated pattern, such as would be more dangerous to the man at the butt than to him who stood in front of the muzzle, were brought; gentlemen with the typical cucumber skin, woolly head, and protruding lips, were there looking very black and shiny. No

nigger was admitted with shoes on, and after a general squat down of the front row, performed by doubling the legs up beneath the person, the palaver began. As a rule, the robes of the learned councillors present, from the fetish man down to the Grand Big Bug and the Deputy Ja-Ja, were white by contrast with the black, shiny skins; and from the noise that was made, and the rum consumed by way of refreshment, a great deal of business must have been done.

The result was that his Majesty of Dahomey—a man of many slaves, and one who delights in “customs” and making blood run like water—went back to his palace, believing himself to be A1; and that, in spite of the ships that came off the coast, he was the greatest monarch under the sun.

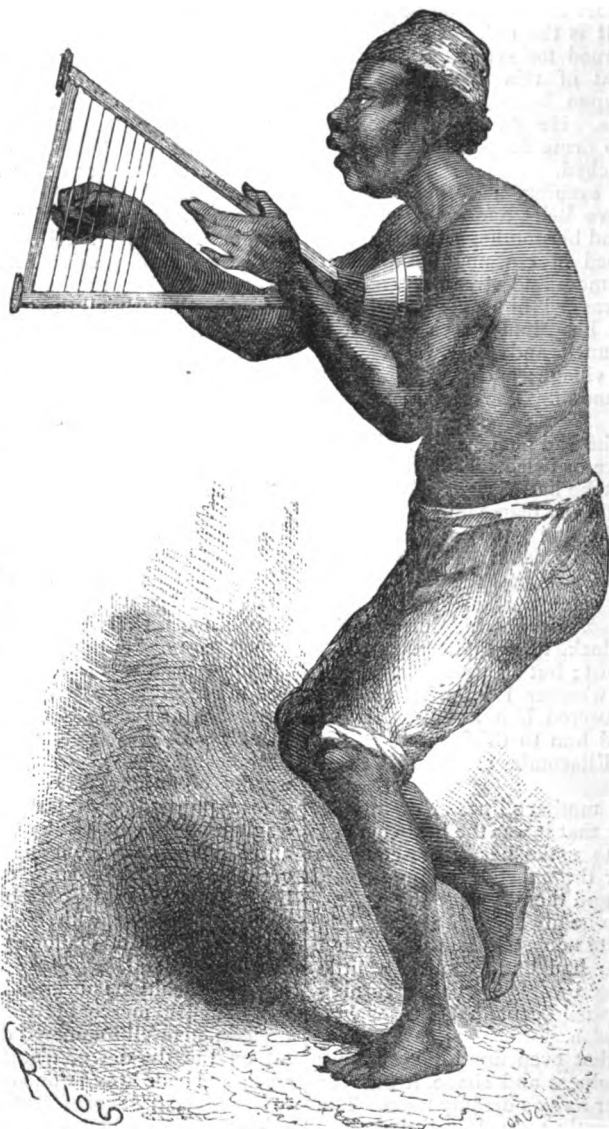
On reaching his palatial halls, where mats were agitated to keep his sable person cool in the heat of the day by black bairns, like Saul of old his spirit became troubled, and his own particular David was sent for to soothe the troubled Saul; for music hath charms on the West Coast of Africa as well as inside that great dish-cover of a place at South Kensington called the Albert Hall. So the minstrel came in native worth and very small cotton breeches, bearing his quaintly-formed seven-stringed harp. As our illustration shows, the Court minstrel of the King of Dahomey is remarkable in all respects, saving colour, for his resemblance to the Apollo of the Greeks with his lyre. For convenience, the lyre is strung laterally instead of vertically, and the hollow calabash portion is held against the chest. These are trifles, however—suffice it that the Court harpist harped; he harped him gently at first, and “sung of love, a tender lay”; but by degrees he warmed him up, and sung “of battle field and deadly fray” to such an extent, that the

King of Dahomey grew excited and fully made up his mind.

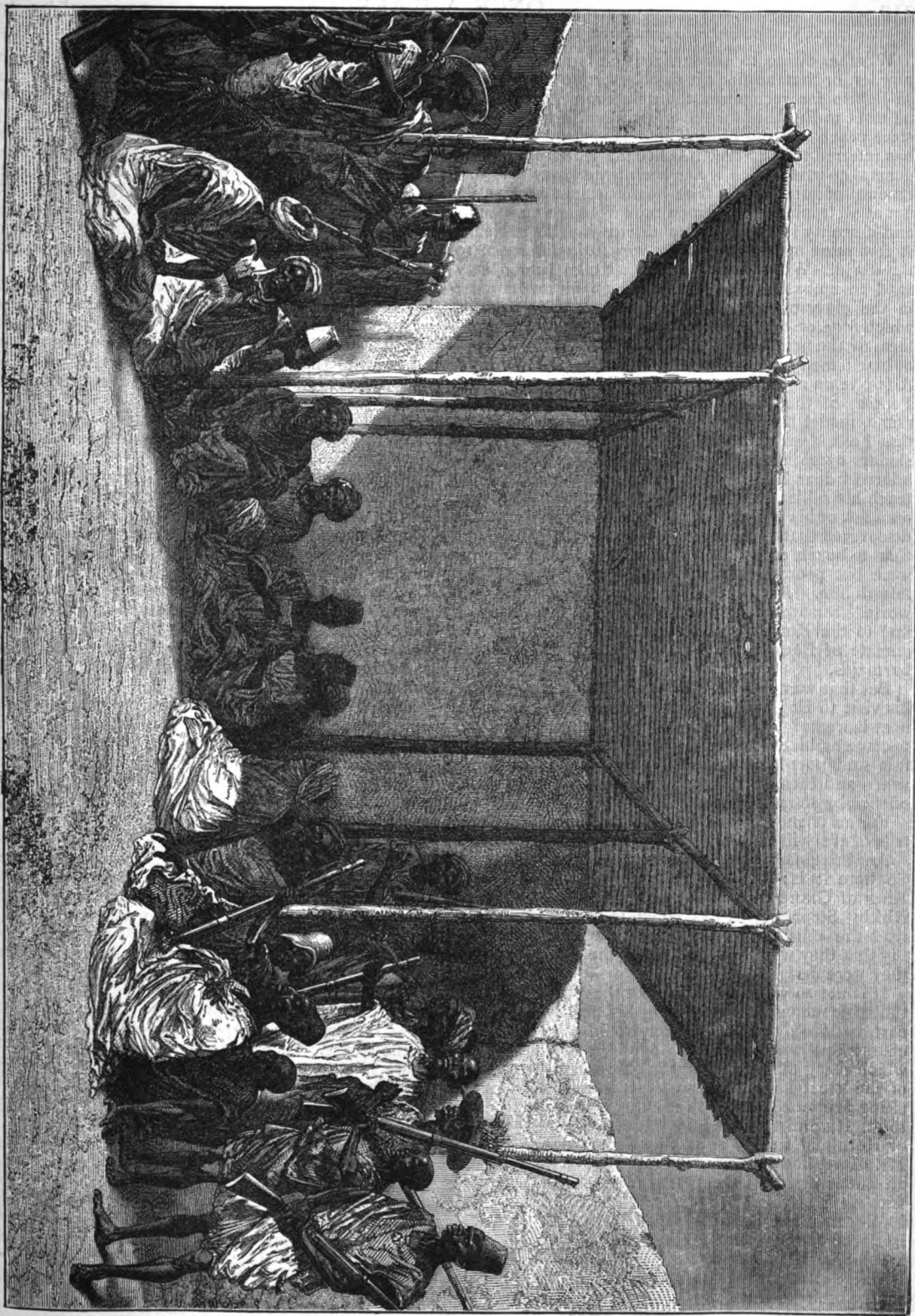
The result was that, in spite of Commodore Hewett's great guns, he sent him word that he would be fetished if he would pay the money asked for; but if the commodore on the station would come within range, he would pay him in powder and bullets sent out of the mouths of muskets.!

The commodore smiled; and knowing that, to use the regular naval phrase, he could knock the whole place into a cocked hat, he waited, giving his sableness time to come to his senses before proceeding to bombard the wretched mud town of a set of inflated savages—gentlemen as hollow, empty, and sounding as their own calabashes. The result has been that our foreign relations with Africa are assuming a most satisfactory guise. His Majesty of Dahomey, persuaded by Lord Derby's diplomacy (and Commodore Hewett's big guns), has made up his mind to pay the mulcted punchcons of palm oil. Again our “spirited foreign policy” is successful, and, thanks to the intervention of her Majesty's Government. Oko Jumbo has resolved to be civil to Ja-Ja. Who does not remember the pigmy war of these Ethiopian potentates! Why, all Africa knew of it, and for many months that section of Birmingham which lives by making muskets at ten shillings and sixpence a-piece grew wealthy over the differences of the West African monarchs; to whom, as her Majesty's enemies, they are as ready to supply war

material as they are to manufacture and supplement the efforts of the missionary societies in India by sending out an abundance of cunningly-made little idols of the newest patterns, Kristnas and Vishnus, Siva, Mahadeva, and the rest—a most charming and artistic trade, by the way.



THE COURT MINSTREL.



THE KING PRESIDING AT A PALAVER.—(Page 209.)

Whether owing to the fact that he is short of gunpowder, or that he finds it pays better to keep quiet, Ja-Ja "so far recognises the obligation under which he rests to England for the effort recently made to restore peace between himself and Oko Jumbo, that he has referred to the Foreign Office the particulars of the general quarrel, which it has been feared may lead to a renewal of hostilities." The hostilities, we confess, do not at all trouble us. African monarchs are numerous, and if scanty in their wardrobes, are rich in subjects. A few more or less can make very little difference to the world. What we do fear is, that Oko Jumbo may send an embassy to England, or even himself appear in the glory of a beadle's coat or a scarlet necktie, which (one or other of them) is the most popular uniform of the princes of Nigritia. We have had enough of black men who are "kings in their own country." A few years ago, the hero of every tea party was King Pepple, of the Bonny River. Pepple at home was not a model monarch; but in England he gave out that he had quite abandoned rum, and taken to missionary operations. The old women—of both sexes—adored "dear King Pepple." He took out a farmer to teach his subjects agriculture, and a lady's-maid to wait on a few of his numerous queens. The farmer speedily discovered that black mud was hard to cultivate, and that a bunch of bananas and a bushel of cocoa-nuts were but poor substitutes for the lordly stipend promised him. As for the lady's-maid, she fared still worse. Suspected by her Majesty No. 1 of "making up" to the King, she discovered to her cost that the climate of Bonny River was very insalubrious for ex-bermaids.

But that was not all. Did not his Majesty, when on his visit to England, go to the extent of appointing a poet-laureate? It is a fact that he did; and it has now become as historical as that Lord Palmerston granted this said poet-laureate the literary pension of £50 a year—and then took it away again, compounding his offence by so much down.

For an offence it was, one which stank in the nostrils of every literary man in England.

An imaginary voice cries out—"Name!—name!" So here it is: was not the poet-laureate of Pepple, King of Grand Bonny, the celebrated Poet Close, of Kirkby Stephen? It has fallen to the lot of many to read the effusions of Mr. Close, and we will at once say that they were quite worthy of the Court for which they were designed.

It is not so very long ago that the poet-laureate of the sable monarch was sending his poems out broadcast, but no editor or publisher would take them. Of course this was another case of gross jealousy, by which rising talent was kept in abeyance. How many of the great have been so kept down! How many rising Miltons have been sat upon, or have sunk down to singing praises concerning Moses' clothing, or Rose's or Horniman's tea! Alas, that such things should be! Mr. Close, however, was more fortunate, for he found an outlet amongst the blacks, where he would meet with no rivalry.

We have not heard whether Ja-Ja or Oko Jumbo has gone to the extent of getting a poet. Their tastes are not so refined as were those of King Pepple.

There always seems to be a good deal more unpleasantry brought from the West Coast of Africa than

profit, and the question often arises, Is it worth while to retain our hold of these wretched black swamps and miasma-breeding settlements? The British people seem to say that it is, for it was only the other day that a disposition to squabble was shown in the House when there was a talk of ceding Gambia to the French—an utterly worthless place, where no one but a black can flourish in idleness and dirt, for which we abuse them, but which is their natural state, as an European soon finds in the lassitude which comes upon him. Of the dirt we say nothing, for so long as water is to be obtained, an Englishman will wash.

There is to be no war, however; for matters seem to have been settled. And as to these black potentates, warned by our experience of King Pepple, we sincerely trust that Lord Derby's diplomacy may settle the troubles of Oko Jumbo and Ja-Ja without the necessity of either of our high allies paying a visit to this country.

The Man with the Note-book.

THE *Echo* says that "An extraordinary story comes from Loughrea, in Ireland, which, if true, suggests a new mode for the preservation of human bodies. The other day, we are told, the body of a full-grown female was dug up by a young man while engaged in cutting turf in Carnagarry Bog, about two miles from Loughrea. It is believed that it must have been buried for upwards of two hundred years, as the turf was quite close all around it, and cut like soap. The appearance of the remains is described as being like that of 'a well-tanned leather bag, of a dark brown colour.' The features are perfect, with the exception of the nose, the top of which is shrunk, and the under-jaw, which is a little on one side. The teeth are regular, and in a sound condition. The hair is said to be fresh and glossy, jet black and very long, while in a knot of it at the back was found a wooden comb, beautifully carved, with a cord and tassel attached, and round the neck there was a cord with a purse." "If true," says the *Echo*. There is no doubt of its truth, for peat has a wonderful antiseptic property. It acts on the human frame after the fashion that oak bark does on skins—tanning, so to speak. It is not so many years since a woman's body, evidently Saxon, was dug out of the peat bog at Crowle, in Lincolnshire, in a perfect state of preservation. In this case the body was upright, as if it had sunk into some treacherous hole.

Mr. Edward Jenkins, M.P., came down rather hard upon the reporters for the public press the other night in the House. He called them "penny-a-liners." Now, there is a saying somewhere about it being "An ill bird that fouls its own nest;" and as Mr. Jenkins has associated himself with the press, with his "Ginx's Baby," "Lord Bantam," "Devil's Chain," and "Blot on the Queen's Head," he ought not to speak sneeringly of those who work on a lower round of the same ladder. Besides, Mr. Jenkins ought to know that the "penny-a-liner" is a misnomer—the amount per line, of which he speaks, having no existence in practice. What wonder if, in future, when Mr. Jenkins begins to speak, the reporters should lay down their pencils, and decline to chronicle the pearls and diamonds which fall from his lips?

Thereby Hangs a Tale.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER LIV.—A QUIET WEDDING.

THERE was just time to snatch a hasty breakfast the next morning before starting for the station, and after a short journey they mounted into the dog-cart which Humphrey had sent to meet them. By comparing times, Pratt, who had taken all the management upon himself, found that he could execute a little plan he had been hatching; and when they neared Penreife, after a chat with the groom about the preparations, he proposed to Richard that they should alight, send the vehicle on, and take the short cut by the lanes.

"If you like," said Richard, quietly; and the sadness that had seemed to hang over him more and more as they neared their journey's end now half unmanned him.

"I thought you'd like better to walk up to the old place alone," said Frank, "instead of having a third person with us."

"Thank you, Frank, thank you," said Richard, in a voice that was husky with emotion. "It was a mistake to come."

"No, no, a kindness to Humphrey and me."

"I—I—thought I could stand it better, and not behave like such a weak fool," said Richard. "There, it's over now. Let's get through our task, so that I may go back."

"You must wait for me, you know, Dick," said Frank, cheerily. "There, cheer up, old man, it isn't for ever and a day. Try and be hopeful, and put on a bright face before the wedding folks. It's all going to be as quiet as possible: a couple of carriages to the church and back. Your old people will be there. Say a kind word to them—there, you know how to do it."

"I'll try and act like a man, Frank, hard as it will be. But you've set me a bitter task."

"Then you shall have some sweet to take with it," said Pratt to himself. Then aloud, "Ah, how sweet this old lane looks. I never saw the ferns brighter or richer. How the sun shines through the trees. What a lovely morning, Dick! I say," he gabbled on in a hasty way, "look at that tiny waterfall. What a change, Dick, from Fountain-court, Temple."

"Why did you come this way?" groaned Richard, as he strove hard to fight down the emotion caused by the recollections that pervaded his memory.

That lane was hallowed to him: but a quarter of a mile farther was the old woman's cottage where he had encountered the sisters; there was the place where he had walked one evening with Tiny; there—oh, there was a happy memory clinging to every tree and mossy block of granite; and but for the strong effort he made, he could have wandered out of the path, thrown himself down amongst the ferns, and cried like a child.

Meanwhile, Pratt chatted on excitedly.

"Bless the dear old place. Why, Dick, that's where I saw my little Fin looking so disdainfully at me, coming round the sharp turn there; and, look here, that's my old perch where I've had many a jolly pipe."

He caught his friend suddenly by the arm, in a strangely excited fashion, and turned him round, as he pointed to a grey, lichen-covered monolith of granite.

"Dick, old man, I could smoke a pipe there now, and sit and whistle like a bird. I say, Dick, how comical a fellow would look up there in his wig and gown, and—thank goodness!"

He said those two last words to himself with a sigh of relief, as, turning round, there, timed to a moment by his vile machinations and those of Fin, the sisters came, basket and fern trowel in hand, from amongst the trees, just as if time had been standing still, and no troubles had intervened.

To two of the party the surprise was complete. Richard stopped short, rigid and firm; while Tiny, as soon as her eyes rested upon him, turned pale, her basket fell to the ground, and uttering a faint cry of pain, she pressed her hand to her side and staggered.

Conventional feelings, rigid determination, everything went down before nature then. With one bound Richard was at Tiny's side, and the next moment, with a cry of joy, the poor girl's arms were round his neck, and she was sobbing on his breast.

The probabilities are that had the insane behaviour of Frank Pratt been seen, he would have lost caste at the bar; for, dashing down his hat and an expensive meerschaum, which was shivered to atoms on the granite path, he executed a wild breakdown, brought his foot to the earth with a flop, and then rushed at Fin; but only to be disappointed, for she was clinging to and sobbing over Dick—that is, as far up as she could reach, crying—

"Oh, you dear, good darling, Dick—pray, pray don't go on breaking her poor heart any more."

"I say," said Pratt, reproachfully, as Richard bent down and kissed the little maid, "what have I done? Aint I anybody?"

"Oh, go away now," cried Fin. "There, you may have one, if nobody's looking. Now, that will do;" and, after suffering a kiss, she returned it with a push.

"Time's up, Dick, come. You shall see her again," said Pratt, looking ruefully at his meerschaum scraps, as he dusted his hat. Then followed a little whispering with Fin, and he caught his friend's arm, as his fellow-conspirator led her sister away.

"This is madness," groaned Richard, as he yielded to his friend's touch, and they walked rapidly away. "Oh, Franky, you contrived this."

"To be sure I did," said Pratt, grinning; "and you shall have another dose to cure you both, if you are good. But quick; now, then, look a man. Here we are."

Richard walked steadily up to the house, where he was pleased to find that all the servants' faces were new. Humphrey met him at the door, and Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd were in the hall ready to approach timidly, as the young man gravely kissed the late housekeeper, and shook hands with Lloyd.

Polly was in the drawing-room, for it was to be a very homely, unconventional marriage; and she blushed warmly on encountering the former owner of the place.

"I wish you every happiness, my dear," said Richard, to set her at ease; and he bent down and kissed her. "Humphrey has told me of your good little heart."

"And you will listen to him, Mr. Lloy—Trevor?" said the girl, mixing the two names together.

"Time to go," said Humphrey; and he handed

Polly, Mrs. Lloyd, and her husband into the first carriage, which was kept back while he, Richard, and Pratt entered the other, and were driven off to the church.

In spite of the endeavours to keep the affair quiet, the little churchyard was crowded, and it was a harder trial for Richard even than he had expected, to hear the whisperings, and receive the friendly nods and bows from so many of those who knew him well.

But he bore it all in a calm, manly fashion; shook hands warmly with Mr. Mervyn, who had come with a white favour in his button-hole; stood best man to Humphrey; and after little Polly, but a week before at school, had been given away by her uncle, and, the wedding over, the carriage had driven back with the bride and bridegroom, he took his place again quite calmly, shook hands with those who clustered round, and was driven back.

Everything went off well; and at the simple wedding breakfast, when called upon, Richard, in a very manly speech, wished health and happiness to the bride and bridegroom. Humphrey responded, broke down, tried again, broke down again, and then, leaving his place, crossed to where Richard sat, grasped his hand, and in a voice choking with emotion, exclaimed—

"Master Dick, I'm speaking for my wife as well as myself when I tell you that, if you wish us to be a happy couple, you must come back to your own."

Richard rose, and returned the strong grasp; but before he could utter a word, Pratt brought his hand down bang upon the table, exclaiming—

"Mother Hubbard, by Jove!"

Every face was directed at the door, where, standing, in her black hat and scarlet shawl, with her hands resting upon the horn of her umbrella, was the little grey old woman of Plymouth station.

"It's dear Aunt Price," cried Polly, jumping up; and, regardless of her finery, she ran to the severe-looking old lady, hugged her affectionately, and then began to unpin her shawl, and take off her hat. "Oh, aunty, I'm so glad you've come."

"And are you married, look you?" said the old lady.

"Married, yes," cried Humphrey, heartily; "we couldn't wait, you know, or it would have been too late. Give's your umbrella, and come and sit down. Why didn't you come last night?"

"It was too far, my poy," said the old lady; "and I was tired. It's a long way, look you, from Caerwmluch, and I'm a very old woman now. Well, Lloyd—well, Jane, you're both looking older than when I was here last, close upon thirty years ago, and nursed you through two illnesses."

"We are quite well," said Mrs. Lloyd; "but didn't expect you here."

"P'raps not, p'raps not," said the old lady; "but Polly here wrote to me to come, and I thought it was time, for she's been telling me strange news, look you."

Lloyd shuffled in his chair, Mrs. Lloyd was silent, and Richard's brow knit as he glanced across the table at Pratt, while Humphrey busied himself in supplying the old lady's plate.

"I got Polly's letter, look you, and I teclare to cootness, if I'd been tead and puried, I think I should have cot up and come, look you. And so you're married to Humphrey! Ah, well, he was a tisagreeable

paby; but he's grown, look you, into a fine lad, and I wish you poth choy."

The old lady took a glass of wine and ate a little, and then grew more garrulous than ever, while no one else seemed disposed to speak.

"And I'm glad to see you again," said the old lady, looking at Richard. "I didn't expect it when I left you at the railway place; and yet I seemed to know you again, look you. I felt I knew the face, and I teclare to cootness I couldn't tell where I'd seen it; but I remember now."

"Come, aunt, darling," said Polly, "make a good breakfast."

"Tinner you mean, child," said the old lady.

"Well, dinner, dear," said Polly; "because I want a long talk with you before we go."

"You're going away, then?"

"Yes, aunt, for a month; but you'll stay till we come back?"

"Well, I ton't know, look you," said the old lady, sturdily. "Jane Lloyd and I never tid get on well together; but if Mr. Richard Trevor there isn't too proud to ask a poor old woman off the mountains—who nursed his poor mother, and tanded him in her arms when he was a paby—I teclare to cootness, I will stay."

A dead silence fell upon the group at the table. Humphrey looked uncomfortable, Polly clung to his arm, Mrs. Lloyd looked white and downcast, and her husband glanced at the door, and motioned a servant who was entering to retire.

Richard broke the silence, after giving a reassuring smile to Humphrey and his wife, by saying, gravely—

"I would ask you to stay with pleasure, Mrs. Price, if I were master here; but you are mistaken. There sits Mr. Humphrey Trevor; I am your own kith and kin, Richard Lloyd."

"Chut!—chut!—chut!" exclaimed the old lady, starting up and speaking angrily, as she pointed at him with one finger. "Who ever saw a Lloyd or a Price with a nose like that? Don't tell me! You're Mr. Richard Trevor, your father's son, and as much like him, look you, as two peas."

The Lloyds rose, Mrs. Lloyd looking like ashes as she clung to her husband's arm; while Pratt left his place, and stood behind the chair of his friend.

"I'd forgotten all about it, look you," said the old lady, chatting away, "till Polly wrote to me from her school; and then it all came back about Jane Lloyd and her paby, and her having the fever when her mistress died. Why, look you, didn't I go up to the nursery after peing town to see the funeral, and find Jane Lloyd had peen up there, and put her paby in the young master's cradle? and, look you, didn't I go town to chide her, and find her all off her head, and she was ill for weeks? I thought she'd tone it without knowing; or, being wild-like, had liked to see her little one in the young master's clothes. I put that all right again, and nursed poth pabies till she got well. Lloyd—Trevor—didn't I see them both as soon as they came into the world, and to you think I ton't know them? Why, look at them!"

She turned to Pratt, who was nearest to her; but she cried out in alarm, for the little fellow had caught her in his arms and kissed her on both cheeks, as he cried—

"It isn't Mother Hubbard, Dick, but the good fairy

out of the story-book. God bless you! old lady, for this. Here, Humphrey, see to your mother."

But Humphrey was pumping away at both Richard Trevor's arms, as he cried, excitedly—

"Hooray! Master Dick. I never felt so happy in my life. Polly, lass, we shall get the cottage, after all."

He saw the next moment, though, that Mrs. Lloyd had fainted dead away; and his were the arms that carried her to her bed-room, while Polly crept to the old Welshwoman's side.

"I came, look you, Master Richard, to put all this right," said the old lady. "Put it was all nonsense, I declare to cootness. Anybody might have seen."

"I—I thank you—I'm confused—dazed, rather," said Trevor, looking from one to the other. "Polly, my poor girl, I'll try to make up to you for this disappointment."

"I'm not disappointed, please, Mr. Richard, sir," said Mrs. Humphrey, bobbing a curtsy, and then trying a boarding-school salute and failing, and blushing terribly. "I'm very happy indeed, and I'm sure Humphrey is—he said so, and he always tells the truth. And if you please, sir, aunt and I will go now into the housekeeper's room."

"That you won't, if I have any influence with some one here," said Pratt. "No, my pretty little wife; you and your brack of a husband shall go off in triumph; and oh, by Jove! here's the present I brought down for you."

Frank Pratt's present was a handsome ring, and he was placing it above the plain one already on her finger, when Humphrey came back.

"She's all right again," he said, huskily. "I was obliged to come away, for she wanted to go—on her knees—and I couldn't stand it. Polly—Aunt Price—she wants you both. Master Dick, sir, isn't this a day?"

CHAPTER LV.—CONCLUSION.

EVERYBODY said, as a matter of course, afterwards, that the whole affair was perfectly absurd, and that anybody could see with half an eye that Humphrey was not a Trevor. All the same, though, he had been accepted for many months as the owner of the estate.

The young couple went off on their wedding trip, for Mrs. Lloyd's illness was of only a transitory nature; and soon after the carriage had taken them to the station, the old housekeeper sent a message to Trevor, asking leave to see him.

What took place at that interview Richard Trevor never said; but the result was that a couple of hours after she and her husband had left the place, having refused Trevor's offer to let them stay, though living on his bounty to the end.

In writing, it needs but a stroke of the pen to carry the reader now to a year ago or the reverse; so let us say that a year has elapsed, and there is once more a dinner party at Penreife, where there are visitors staying. It is to meet them that Sir Hampton and Lady Rea are coming from Tolcarne. One of the visitors is with her sister beneath one of the shady trees on the lawn; and the other, a little, solemn-looking man, her husband, has been making a tour of the place with Richard Trevor.

They stopped at the pretty bailiff's cottage, with its little farm, to drink new milk, tempered from a flask, offered in glasses by pretty Mrs. Humphrey Lloyd, who looked wonderfully important with the new baby. Then they visited the stables, where an old friend is enjoying a pipe after seeing to the comforts of the horses; for Sam Jenkles, when poor Ratty was obstinate for the last time, and insisted upon dying of old age in the road instead of at peace in the stables, gladly accepted the offer made to him to take the superintendence of the little stud at Penreife; while his wife lives in one of the prettiest cottages on the estate, and is always busy at the house during company times.

Sam's news when he came down was that Mrs. Fiddison had changed her name, having been proposed to by a widower who fancied she was one of the bereaved; also that one Barney had got into some little difficulty with the police, and had gone for change of air.

On returning to the house for dressing, the ladies were already prepared, and the gentlemen had only time to hurry on their things before there was a loud "Er-rum" in the hall, and Sir Hampton Rea was ready to button-hole his sons-in-law, telling the Cornish one that the new greenhouse was a great success, and that Cutbush should come over the next day to see to the wistaria.

As for Lady Rea, she was being heartily kissed, every kiss budding into a smile on her pleasant face, till Tiny made the discovery that the plump, affectionate little dame was coming undone, when she had her whisked away and pinned, volubly telling her daughter that Pepine was so ill, Aunt Matty had not the heart to come.

At eleven precisely the last "Er-rum" is heard in the hall, and peace—truly a blessed peace—falls on the pleasant Cornish home.

Three months after we have the return visit, Richard Trevor and Valentina, his wife, being up at Frank Pratt's old-fashioned house at Highgate, where the only trouble happy little Fin can complain of is that Frank is so hunted by the solicitors that he has no peace. Fin has quite made up her mind that he will be Lord Chancellor; but Frank thinks it more than doubtful, and is very fond of teasing his wife, his great *coup* being to tell her that she asked him to marry her at last.

There is a quiet, grave look in the faces of Richard and his wife, for they have paid two visits that day—one to the living, one to the dead.

Mrs. Vanleigh is living in a pleasant little cottage in a Highgate lane, and from her they learn that Sir Felix Landells marries the daughter of an earl in a few weeks; also that Captain, now Major, Vanleigh is still in India, where he is likely to stay; but that he writes regularly to his neglected wife, and has devoted himself heart and soul to his profession.

The visit to the dead was made in Highgate Cemetery, where there is a neat little railing round a grave—green in summer, purple in spring with violets; and as husband and wife stand hand in hand there, the tears of the latter fall fast, while his eyes are blurred and misty as he pictures the past, and seems to see the slight, fragile form slowly wasting day by day, till once more, for the thousandth time, he conjures up the dimly lit room, and the solemn scene wherein he was an actor. He knows that the long, dark tress of hair

lies upon his wife's bosom; and he knows, too, that in her gentle heart there is no tinge of jealous feeling or want of faith; for as he raises his head with a muttered "God rest her!" he meets the loving look of a sweet, trusting pair of eyes. Lastly, they gaze together at the simple headstone, but his are even now too blurred to read the simple inscription—"NETTA."

THE END.

The Man in the Open Air.

THE enemies of small birds as well as the greater kinds are legion—the gun, the trap, the net, the limed twig, are ever at work, when they are able to fly; while the birds' nester and the naturalist rob their homes before they are out of the shell, to say nothing of the murderers they meet with of their own species at every turn. But we did not expect to find so great a bird adversary in the angler as the last few weeks have brought to light. True, the flyfisher covets a wing here, and a few tail feathers there, to simulate his lures, and has little mercy on that beautiful "flash of jewellery," the kingfisher; against all and several of these he has his special indictment for doing in particular what man does wholesale, sustaining an existence the *menu* of which is ordained by Nature. But what have the swallows done to deserve censure? We were under the impression that these birds were the greatest of benefactors, ever on the wing clearing the hot air of what would prove an intolerable infliction. We recollect, on one occasion, being outside the coach then running between Corwen and Bala, North Wales, when we suddenly plunged into a dark cloud of gnats. The horses became fidgety; "one-eyed Jones," the driver, could not keep his only optic open; and the passengers were for a time almost blinded. When we got through this plague of winged insects, we endeavoured to ascertain the reason of so unwonted a nuisance, and found that there was neither house, barn, nor shed for miles, and consequently there was no building locality for the swallows, which collected instead in more eligible quarters. A few years afterwards railway arches and stations afforded convenient shelter for the mud huts of these birds, and we do not hear any complaints of a plethora of gnats or other ephemera. But to the charge to which we allude. It will be found in the *Field* of June 10th, 1876, from the facile pen of Mr. Francis Francis—the scene, the river Itchen, near Winchester:—

"Formerly, when the May-fly abounded in countless numbers, it mattered very little if the swallows did take toll of them. But the swallows have been protected, and nature has been rough on the May-flies. In some places the May-fly has been extinguished; in others there are still enough left, with care, to (in time) recover the stock; but there certainly are not enough for this purpose and to feed the swallows as well; and, if the May-fly is ever to be restored to its old form, the swallows must be driven away from the riverside while it is about . . . and unless the gun be resorted to to drive the swallows away while the May-fly is rising on the river, proprietors of fisheries where it is thin must expect to see it altogether extinguished."

Mr. Francis recommends blank powder to frighten

away the swallows and swifts, if people are delicate in their susceptibilities; but we doubt whether blank cartridge or shot would altogether succeed in driving them away. If any person has watched people shooting swallows on the wing, he will have noticed the persistency with which they come over and over again through the same space, but just occupied by one of the victims of the gunner. Indeed, they will descend and swoop down after the fallen bird, and nothing short of decimation or total annihilation will get rid of them. Then what would be the consequence? After the short space of time when the May-fly is past, other insects would prevail, and, in the absence of their natural destroyers, would become an insufferable nuisance, even to the fly-fisher, who, like Mr. Briggs, mayhap, in *Punch*, would fain have to put his head under his landing net, for a relief from their minute but not the less formidable stings. We do not think that the swallows are the sole cause of the scarcity of the May-fly. We would rather attribute its sparseness to the sewage which enters our streams, and poisons the larva of this insect; or, indirectly, to the filth encouraging other inhabitants of the waters, enemies to their predecessors. This certainly agrees with years of observation; and we therefore consider that the absence of the clouds of these ephemera, which we used to see, is chiefly attributable to man and not to bird.

Tench in Ponds.

THERE still seems much uncertainty as to the habits of various freshwater fish. We have seen some interesting facts respecting tench, which raise a question as to whether these fish prey upon one another. In the case to which we allude, a large number of fair-sized tench were placed in a pond, where they were left for some years, very few being caught, as the water was choked with weeds. When at last the pond was emptied, about a sixth of the original number were found, scarcely altered in size, and in terribly poor condition—none of any medium weight, but an immense quantity of young only a few inches long, and all the same size. One naturally supposes that there must have been fish between the two kinds in size; but if so, what had become of them? Had they been devoured by the elder tench, or could any other undiscovered enemy have gained access to them? The owner had several of these diminutive tench removed to other ponds, with the intention of making a future investigation as to their growth and habits. In the case of eels placed in a pond under similar circumstances, we are not surprised to hear that their number was considerably reduced in the course of years, as we expect this cannibalism from them; but the tench have so different a reputation that we incline to think there must be some other elucidation of the mystery.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.—"POND'S EXTRACT."—This wonderful Pain Destroyer and Healer seems likely to acquire equal popularity in this country to that it has already won in America. So rapidly are sales increasing, that New and Extensive Premises have been taken at 482, OXFORD-STREET, where every convenience is now provided for the European and Colonial demand.

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER XVII.—ROSES ON THE BRINK.

A HAPPY group encircled the fireside in the Knowles's drawing-room. It consisted but of three persons; but each had secret cause for satisfaction.

News had come of Edmund Harcourt's convalescence. He was better—almost well. The doctor had given him permission to go out. So a quiet little dinner had been arranged. There was to be only Eva, her father, Aunt Effra, the invalid, and his friend, Randolph Agnew.

And now, as twilight closed in, and the hour drew near, the three members of the household were assembled in the drawing-room, awaiting the guests.

It was very pleasant.

The kindly parent whose only thought and care, out of politics (in connection with which the name of Edgar Homersham Knowles was a power), were for his child—his beloved Eva—in her happiness was happy; and this night it was enough to look into her joyous face, and to note the buoyancy of all her movements, to be convinced that no cloud rested on her innocent heart. A girl—a mere girl—she was just awakening to the first instincts of womanhood: those instincts were quickened by love, and the result was a fulness of bliss as yet wholly unalloyed.

The contemplation of her niece's happiness might or might not have been a source of gratification to Aunt Effra. She was always severe upon the young, and apt to confound enjoyment with impropriety. As it was, she had no leisure to think of others. She had seen *him* again! She had encountered Marco by the merest accident in an adjoining square. He had been all politeness, she had been all graciousness; and in the delightful remembrance of a few words which had passed between them she had forgotten the fairy girl with the blue eyes and the flaxen curls at Hyde Park Corner, who had for the moment given her susceptible heart so severe a pang. Thus she, too, was happy—all the more so, perhaps, as she nursed and fondled her unshared secret in the inmost recesses of her dove-like bosom.

As they sat silent, each deep in thought, the hour struck.

Eva sprang up.

"He is late!" she exclaimed. "Is it not very strange?"

Her father smiled.

"Well, not very, I think," he returned. "We must give the invalid a little grace—say a few seconds."

"But suppose he should be ill again? Suppose he has had a relapse?"

"Better suppose that his carriage is now stopping at the door."

She ran to the window and looked out; then turned back, with a face crimson with delight.

"It is he," she cried; "oh, I am so glad!"

To clap her hands with childish transport was the only way in which she could get rid of her exuberance of delight, and contain herself till Edmund Harcourt was fairly in the room.

He entered slowly, looking pale and wasted, but very handsome. Illness has often a refining effect, and it

had been so in this case. The lustrous eyes gleamed all the brighter from the dark caverns in which they were set. The white brow and the wan cheeks added impressiveness to a fine face; for Harcourt, though no longer in his fresh youth, was still unquestionably handsome.

The greetings extended to him were cordial. Eva welcomed him with undisguised rapture.

"Oh, you dear, dear thing!" she exclaimed. "I was so afraid you would not come."

"Afraid? Why, I thought myself a model of punctuality."

"Oh, yes, yes, of course; only I thought you might have come a little before the time."

She was right: that is love's punctuality.

But Harcourt did not comprehend this, and did not pretend to do so. He gave up defending himself, and shifted the conversation to more agreeable topics. He was a brilliant talker, and in spite of his weak state he laid himself out to please. Knowles, accustomed to good society, was delighted. Eva was simply entranced.

The little dinner passed off charmingly—a perfect success.

Then Eva carried off her lover in triumph to a sofa in the drawing-room, remote from the rest, and they two fell into deep and solemn converse.

Firstly, she would know every particular of the dreadful affair that had so nearly cost Harcourt his life.

He told her all he knew in two words—he was walking, he was shot.

There was no more to be said.

"But why, why should such an attempt be made on your life?" Eva persisted.

"How could he possibly know?" he asked in return.

She was not satisfied.

"One thing was clear: he must have made some dreadful enemy!"

"Not that he was aware of."

"How could he account for this terrible thing, then?"

"How?" he replied, with an airy lightness. "What more likely than that I should have been mistaken for somebody else in those lawless parts—for it *was* a low part—and should have received the benefit of the doubt?"

"That," she admitted, "was possible."

Still she shuddered.

And it was noteworthy that Harcourt himself changed colour at this reference to the secret foe, as if he did not half like the idea. As who would? It is not pleasant to feel that one's steps are dogged, and there is always a foe lying in wait for one's life.

"Depend on it, Eva, darling," he said, with as much indifference as he could muster, "there is nothing in it. I have no enemies."

She held up her rosy forefinger, as if to check that boast.

"You are wrong," she said; "you have made an enemy, and one who will stop at nothing in her vindictiveness!"

"Her vindictiveness," he echoed. "Why, who is this?"

"Who should it be but Ruby Framlingham—"

"She!"

He uttered the word with scornful indifference.

"Ah, you may smile," cried Eva; "but remember, you *did* love her."

"Never!"

"You are quite—quite sure?"

"Quite."

"I knew it—I knew it," exclaimed the excited girl, triumphantly. "And she dared to tell me, here in this room, that it was so."

"Mere jealousy," returned Harcourt—"mere petty spite. And she came here to say this?"

"Yes, and more, to warn me—me!—that you were unworthy of my love, and would only bring me to misery and misfortune."

Harcourt listened to the words with a changed face; his teeth chattered, a cold damp broke out on his brow. But he had been ill, and was still weak.

Eva thought of that as she saw the effect her words had produced, and was loud in self-reproaches for having been so thoughtless and indiscreet. She would fain have changed the subject, but Harcourt would not.

"Tell me," he said, "did she assign reasons for this folly?"

"No."

"She simply came as your *dear* friend, who had your happiness so much at heart, to try and poison your mind against me, and so try to break off our union. Was that so?"

"It was."

"And she was utterly without facts, without arguments on which to found her advice?"

"Yes; because I refused to listen to her statements, and tore to pieces the paper she gave me, that I might confirm them."

"What! She gave you—a paper?" he asked, with bloodless lips. "And you destroyed it? You—you acted bravely, Eva; acted like the true, noble girl you are. One question more. Did she—did she name her father in this matter—the Brothers Framlingham, you know—did she name them?"

"She did not."

Involuntarily he heaved a sigh of relief, and drawing forth his handkerchief, drew it across his brow. Then he laughed—a sharp, forced laugh.

"As I expected," he said; "all the invention of her own little, jealous head. All got up to distress you—her rival—and to injure me, her friend, if she would suffer me to remain so; but not her lover. Never!"

Eva listened to those words with a thrill of delight. That final assertion gave her a sensation of rapture so profound that it seemed to her as if she must scream out, as if the sense of what she was experiencing must find expression in some shape far other than in words. With difficulty she controlled herself, though she could not prevent her undisguised love and admiration for this man declaring itself in the expressive force of her liquidly-lustrous eye.

She looked gratitude. She looked love.

Edmund Harcourt understood, and sat with one little hand clasped in his palm, handsome and radiant. Yes, though the first flush of youth had passed, he was still very handsome—was distinguished by a manliness so fascinating to women; and the experience of this evening, following as it did on long days of suffering loneliness, filled him with undisguised satisfaction.

In those hours the roses of happiness seemed once again to spring up in the barren pathway of life. They

rose bright, beautiful, fragrant, cheating the eye, and intoxicating the senses.

It was but an illusion; but he was not a man to despise even illusions, if they were strong enough to give him a moment's enjoyment.

He was not one to strain his neck to see over the roses to where the precipice yawned beyond.

Besides, he did not in those moments think of the precipice.

He did not know it was so near.

While Eva and he thus beguiled the rosy moments, Randolph Agnew did his best to entertain his host, and to play propriety to Aunt Effra. The first was not difficult. Wrapped up in politics, and conversant with the topics of the day, Mr. Knowles was easily entertained; but his sister presented a trial.

She carried her head high and her nose in the air to a degree that was positively maddening.

Seizing unexpected moments, she came down upon Agnew with questions about himself and his friend, their families, connections, means, and prospects, which were both rude and irritating.

"She has heard something, and suspects more," he thought. "Who can have been poisoning her mind? Who knows enough to have roused her animosity?"

Had he known more, he might have suspected the crafty Marco.

As it was, he was bewildered, and his position was one of the most trying and unpleasant he had ever been subjected to. The cold perspiration stood on his brow at some of the questions aimed at him, and the difficulty of parrying, rather than answering, them became a perfect torture: it seemed as if the time never passed so slowly, and the evening would never be over. His relief when her father called on Eva for a little music was intense; it gave him a respite for which he could not be too intensely grateful. After Eva, he himself volunteered to sing, and this gained a further release from his persecution.

Satiated with music, like most men of his circle, Edgar Knowles availed himself of the opportunity afforded by the song to give a glance at the evening papers just brought in. They were not very brilliant, and he yawned over them listlessly.

But as Agnew resumed his seat, his eyes lighted on a paragraph which kindled a momentary flash of interest.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "here's a case that will be talked of in the City. A claim of twenty thousand pounds refused by insurers on the ground of fraud and conspiracy."

Edmund Harcourt involuntarily rose.

"What ship?" he asked, eagerly.

"Ship! How did you know it was a ship? It might have been a life or a house. But you're right. It is a ship—the *Hannah*."

"What!"

The word was screamed out rather than uttered.

"You know something of this?" Mr. Knowles demanded, with some surprise in his tone.

"No, no," returned Harcourt, suddenly assuming a tone of indifference; "but the ship belongs to a friend of mine—that is, an acquaintance—Pagnell by name, and—and I am astounded."

"It is a serious thing," was the answer; "and now I think of it, Framlingham, I fancy, mentioned that ship

as one on his list. He must have had a narrow escape. Twenty thousand is no joke!"

There could be no disputing that. So, all agreeing, the subject soon passed over; but not the effect the sudden announcement had produced on Harcourt, and in a lesser degree on Agnew. They fought against it; but their agitation was marked, and it was with difficulty they could bring themselves to take further part or interest in what was going on. Thus the evening dragged, and at the earliest possible hour the men took their departure, Harcourt first announcing a time at which he might see Knowles on the business part of what he was permitted to regard as his engagement with Eva.

The latter accompanied her lover as far as the conservatory leading to the stairs for a few parting words.

That interval Aunt Effra seized on to give a warning word.

"Edgar," she said, shaking a forefinger ominously before his nose, "you are a fool. You are throwing your girl away. That man is no better than he should be, take my word for it; and if you suffer Eva to love him—"

"Suffer!" he interrupted. "It is easy to say that; but how am I to help it? Besides, what grounds have you for such an assertion?"

"Grounds? Why, do you think I can't see beyond my own nose? But, there—you're like all the rest of your countrymen, you're so excessively stupid!"

Eva, returning at this instant, flung her arms about her father's neck.

"Oh, papa!" she cried, "I do—do love him so very dearly!"

He kissed her cheek tenderly, but said nothing; while his sister gave a contemptuous grunt.

A Day on the River.

WHENEVER I want a day's thorough amusement, I go fishing on the Thames. There are two or three old fishermen whose peculiar idiosyncrasies are so deliciously funny, that, apart from the glory of catching fish, to me, listening with the gravity of a judge, there is more real enjoyment to be got from their inexhaustible fund of wonderful stories—I won't call them lies—than from the best comic authors of the day. It would be a pity to curb their spontaneous flow of invention, so I shall refrain from giving the names of any answering to this description, although, without doubt, the experienced reader can fill in the deficit.

I have been sufficiently fortunate to possess one of these fishermen—that is, he is now in my immediate service, and watches my movements more like a faithful dog in his fidelity than in accordance with the proverbial fickleness of human nature. Wherever I go, he goes; where I stay, he stays. He is my jester, my companion, my friend—in fact, the ideal of what every sportsman should have by him as an attendant: an honest, generally sober (I am obliged to qualify his sobriety), faithful servant. I saved his life when he was drowning, about ten years ago, and he has been with me ever since. He is like his master, not married; and doesn't want to be, he says. His name is Matlock, and by that cognomen he is usually addressed. Tall and spare, about fifty years of age, with iron-grey hair, very little

whiskers, long face, and a very pronounced nose—quite long enough to be, in all propriety, styled a proboscis: this is his personal description. Every word he utters, as he graphically expresses it, "weighs a pound," so full of significance is it, and uttered with such ponderous gravity.

Now I will explain why this gentleman is introduced to the reader. When I go Thames fishing, he invariably goes too, to the ineffable disgust of old Joe, the punt fisherman, whom I always have, if possible. Between these two there is an enmity of a peculiar nature. It is exceedingly acrid, and occasions very often the most astounding dialogues ever imagined by the brain of man.

Old Joe is about the age of Matlock, but in everything else they are dissimilar. Matlock affirmed one day that Joe had a face like "a Dutch cheese with a slit in it." Old Joe observed that Matlock's was very like a cheese-cutter. Really, Joe's face is round and red. His general outline is globular. He is one-eyed, and always wears a nondescript envelope of blue tied round him, which in the distance, far from lending enchantment to the view, reminds one of a gigantic blue-bag, with legs and arms. He suffers greatly from gout, and only drinks whiskey.

Wishing to show an old college chum of mine some good fishing, I invited him to go with me to Penton Hook for a day's bream fishing, which, as every angler knows, can at this period of the season be had there to perfection. I duly arranged with Joe some days previously to meet us with the punt on the morning I had fixed upon. Harry and I arrived there in good time, accompanied by my factotum, Matlock, carrying the rods, &c.; and after a few words of recognition to Mrs. Trotter, at the lock-house, we passed on to the usual meeting place, rather lower down.

"Matlock," said I, as we slowly walked onwards, "be careful to-day not to rile him too much."

He understood me, and touching his hat, said—

"Right! if you please, sir."

This is Matlock's most polite way of acquiescing. He had an eye to the good opinion of my friend.

"You'll see some fun to-day, my boy," said I to Harry Ruck; "but take the advice of a friend: don't you interfere between them, or you will find the proverb 'twixt two stools, &c.' come most forcibly near an application."

He did not, however, appreciate the advice till later on. By this time we were in sight of the punt. I could just distinguish Joe, and that was all.

"Where is he?" asked Harry.

"Don't you see that blue affair in the stern?"

"Is that a man?"

"Yes, that's Joe," said I.

Sure enough, Joe was doubled up as nearly as his great bulk would admit, into an inert lump of ultramarine, certainly presenting no *prima facie* appearance of humanity. He was asleep, with his short, black clay pipe halfway down his throat; and evidently he was in a state of great repose, which was only interrupted by his gentle snoring.

We stood at the punt's head silently.

"Joe!" I roared out at last, like a stentor—"Joe!"

A snort like a miniature roll of thunder was the only result.

Matlock entered the punt, and, after a great deal of

shaking, Joe revived with a comical little sigh, as if he had just come off a long journey, and felt fatigued.

"Beg pardon, Mas'r John" (he meant me, reader). "Was wery tired; how be you 's morning, Mas'r John? How be you, sir?"

This to Harry, and Joe then coolly turned his back on poor Matlock.

Matlock, however, mindful of my injunction, took no notice.

Presently Joe slowly faced about—

"Got any 'bacca, 'Bosis?"

'Bosis meant Matlock, and the appellation I interpret, dear reader, to mean an abbreviation of the term "proboscis;" a playful allusion this to the nasal appendage of my factotum, in which Joe generally indulges.

"I hev, Mr. Heath; and what's more, I means to keep it," was the urbane reply, delivered with affecting solemnity.

Joe sighed sadly. I handed my pouch to him, and, to my friend's astonishment, he drew from his pocket not the small black pipe aforesaid, but a very large one, capable of holding an ounce or thereabout, and deliberately filled it. I had seen this done frequently, so made no remark, but waited until the smaller pipe was also replenished, and then asked—

"Shall we get any sport to-day, Joe?"

"Well," answered Joe, lighting his pipe leisurely—"well"—puff, puff—"m'hap yer med, an' m'hap yer"—puff—"medn't."

This was highly satisfactory.

"There wer a gent down here yisterday," he continued, screwing up his one eye till it resembled a green rushlight flame—"ah! yer oughter bin 'ere."

"Yes, no doubt. But never mind about that, Joe," I observed, mildly; "you told me that before, you know." Indeed he had, many times. "Put the rods together, please."

"What about the gentleman?" asked Harry. "Tell me, Joe; I haven't heard it."

Joe left off to talk, of course.

"Well, this 'ere gent (have yer such a thing as a drop o' whiskey—thank yer kindly, sir) he says to me, says he—"

"Now then, gimlet eye, look sharp," snarled Matlock.

"Who pulled your string, 'Bosis?" retorted Joe in anger, forgetting his tale. "If I'd got er snout like yourn, I'd shave the back er me hed, and learn to walk back'ards, and let the hair grow over my face. That's what's the matter with you."

Matlock blew his offending nose in inexpressible rage. Joe relapsed into a volume of smoke, and preparations for commencing. Harry and I held our sides. Then ensued what could not but be called a timely pause in the conversation.

At last all was ready, and after another "wee dram drappie," Joe undid the chain and lifted the punt pole. In doing so, he in some way nearly knocked Matlock out of the boat.

"Hallo, matey," he cried, not at all sorry apparently, "I shall drown you if yer aint keeful. Okkard"—this last was applied to the pole in great wrath.

"Mr. Heath," said Matlock, solemnly, on recovering his balance, "you'll come to the gallows-tree."

Joe sighed his little quaint stuffy sigh again, and said—

"So I will when you're hung, if I travels forty miles to."

At this we fairly boiled over. Joe finished his opponent by asking us not to laugh at the poor "little man" any more.

"If you are born to be hung you won't be drowned, then, Matlock," said my friend, by way of consolation.

The irrepressible Joe was on the point of saying something, when I stopped him sharply.

"Now, Joe, do let us begin fishing; and don't waste so much time in chatter."

Joe forthwith proceeded to moor the punt.

It was a lovely morning. Round and round the weather-beaten head piles in dimpling eddies the water curled, and the sunbeams flashed and shimmered on its surface. In my opinion, this spot is one of the sweetest throughout the whole length of the river, both for natural scenery and for sport. As you sit comfortably moored in the punt, the landscape rises near and far before you, clothed in the greenest foliage; and verdant meadows stretch away from the banks, apparently for miles. Huge pollards skirt the waters, and beneath their umbrageous branches repose the well-favoured cattle of the neighbouring farms; the rush and roar of the Abbey stream rapids can be heard in the distance; and as you observe all this, gently feeling the line the while, a kingfisher, with its brilliant plumage, perhaps darts before the gaze like a flash of azure light.

By the time we were moored and attentively ledgering, it dawned on the otherwise somnolent perceptions of Joe that it was lunch-time. Now, lunch-time with this individual meant twelve o'clock; but as I make a point of always letting my fishermen have their own way, I offered no remonstrance to his spreading it out. We therefore had luncheon.

As I was quite aware that immediately he had swallowed a sufficient quota of whiskey Joe would become garrulous, towards the end of luncheon-time I proceeded to take precautions against his encouragement. By a series of nods and winks, and slips of paper, I made it quite safe that no questions should be asked relative to any yarn Joe might think fit to treat us to. This was followed out to the letter; but in the intervals of catching and landing fish, Joe found it impossible to avoid telling Harry the marvellous adventures he had undergone. Some of them were not original, others were. I cannot refrain from giving a specimen of what we were treated to for five mortal hours. The quaint, curious humour of the relator, however, saved them from positively boring us. I fear it is impossible to produce that here.

"Yes," said old Joe, as if speaking to himself—"yes, I was in at Jack 'Arnes' one night t'last week, and there stood a cockney-butterfly sort o' chap, a talking like a parson about shooting and sich. Says I, 'My gentil sir, get out; you can't shoot.'

"He says, says he, 'Yes, but I can; tell'ee old man what I done once.'

"'Was yer punished for it?' says I.

"'No,' says he. 'I shot seventeen dozen larks at one shot, in our turmut field.'

"'Oh, dear! how you must suffer,' says I.

"'From what?' says he.

"'Lies,' says I. And they all laughed. 'Well,' says I, 'our father sent me out into the turmut when I

were a boy, and I should ha' had a good haul but for one unfortnit accident, which were, I didn't shoot high enough. The shots only cut their legs off. Oh, dear—oh, dear, I was sorry," says I.

"But how many legs were there?" says he.

"Well," says I, "since you asked me, I'll tell'ee—us took out seventeen bran sacks and filled 'em."

This is the way in which we were beguiled until the shades of evening approached, when my friend, not regarding the advice I gave him early in the morning, trespassed on Joe's dominions in this wise. Sport was waning, and Joe suddenly took Harry's rod, and commenced winding-up.

"What's that for, Joe?" said Harry.

"Can't yer feel there aint no bait on?" demanded Joe, quite roughly, and in a tone which irritated my unsophisticated friend.

"No," he returned, sharply; "we're not all so clever as you, old man."

"Ugh!" said Joe; "stupid as yer are, yer might hev knowned that."

"Joseph," said Matlock, mildly, "you shouldn't speak like that."

"You run and play, my little man, else yer'll wake baby," returned Joe, now like a hedgehog; "and next time yer goes near a tree, mind yer don't get entangled in the branches with that 'ere 'bosis o' yours. Astocking 'ud jest fit it. Put yer nose under yer arm—go home."

This was getting serious; so, throwing the necessary oil on the troubled waters in the shape of an offer of my flask to Joe, I succeeded in quelling the fast approaching disturbance, and we departed for shore and a nice substantial dinner at the lock-house.

This sketch is really founded on fact. There are those who will recognize the principal actor. It may be added that the bream and barbel were properly attended to on the day in question, and over fifty pounds were the united results of the three rods.

The Man with the Note-book.

NOW, ladies, listen. All ye who take delight in the fine feathers that make fine birds, hearken to an account of the principal dresses seen at this year's races at Ascot. One was a figured satin of a salmon-pink colour, open in front to show a canary petticoat, and having the train edged with a trimming of that shade. A parasol to match the dress, and a bonnet of the same hue as the petticoat, completed an *ensemble* as rich as any of the series of different costumes in which the wearer has appeared on any of the four days. Again were satin and velvet much worn; and the juxtaposition of black or very dark tints with pale colours exercised the utmost skill in avoidance of an inharmonious result. A deep black dress, with peeps of the palest primrose, like streaks of a calm evening sky beginning to appear after a storm, was eminently effective; and almost or quite as striking was another toilet of black, with red slashes on the sleeves and elsewhere. Nothing was much prettier than a light-brown dress, artfully cut, and wholly dependent on form for its effect. "Oh!" exclaims some fair reader, "how lovely!"

The anglers have been doing very well this season;

but the fine, hot, sunny weather must affect them, and make water clear and fish fastidious. A very handsome trout of 9½ lbs. has been taken in the Thames, at Sunbury, by Mr. Robinson, and one of 5½ lbs. at Chertsey Weir, by Mr. T. R. Dyer. Three trout have been caught whilst barbel fishing with a lobworm, at Penton Hook. A large trout, estimated at about 15 lbs., ran ashore after a dace at Kingston, and a man, passing by at the time, stepped in the water and had hold of the fish, but it slipped out of his hands and got into the river again. Mr. Jardine has been very successful amongst the trout in private waters. The chub are feeding very freely. Mr. T. Hansard, at Kingston, got ten fish, the largest 5 lbs. Mr. A. D. Chapman, at Hampton Court, 20 lbs. weight, the largest 4 lbs.—all caught with small roach tackle and cheese paste; and Mr. J. W. Gant a good parcel of fish from Maidenhead. The members of the metropolitan angling clubs have been trying most of the rivers and streams within easy reach of London. The Stanley Anglers have been doing very well, and sixteen of the members have weighed in this week 77 lbs. of pike, 34 lbs. of perch, 60 lbs. of roach, 15 lbs. of trout, 22 lbs. of chub, 3 lbs. of tench, and 3 lbs. of bream, in all 214 lbs.—Mr. Robert Forbes alone contributing 48 lbs., Mr. Nix 35 lbs., and Mr. Hewitt 27 lbs.

An amusing story concerning light and shade, one that should be interesting to painters, is told of the time when Lord Amherst's embassy visited Peking. The mandarins were shown a portrait of George III., which was destined as a present for the Emperor of China, and the features of which were in half-shadow. A Celestial critic asked why the King of England had one side of his face covered with dirt? What would the hypercritical mandarin have thought of a "Rembrandt?"

An excellent institution has lately been brought prominently into notice by a concert given at St. James's Hall by Mrs. Weldon, who, for the last eight years, has been working almost unaided, and devoting her whole time and fortune to the establishment of a school for orphans, in whose education music is understood to take a prominent part. Mrs. Weldon, however, states that though a musical education is the distinguishing feature of her school, she by no means wishes it to be imagined that she is training the children for professional singers, the music being rather treated as a profitable recreation, and a trade being taught them as a means of livelihood. The object of the concert was to attract notice to Mrs. Weldon's system, and to obtain funds for the extension of the school. In 1870 she gave a concert at Dudley House for the same purpose. Two of the pupils have won scholarships at the South Kensington Training School of Music.

It would make a curious collection to note down all the different "notices to trespassers" that one sees in different parts of the country. They might be divided, we think, under three heads—the vicious, the vexatious, and the vague. Where, for instance, you see a notice stuck up, "No public road," you may be pretty sure there is a footpath that you may take; or where it is intimated that "No dog is allowed within these grounds,"

a right of way will be quite certain to exist for the ordinary pedestrian. These are specimens of the vague, which is perhaps the most useful class of notices, for they tell us very often that we may go through parks and fields where we should never have dreamt of making our way. The vicious are those which go beyond "Beware of the dog," and intimate that "Man-traps and spring guns" are kept on the premises. Such notices also tell us that "All dogs will be shot," and other terrible measures will be taken, which, like all boasting and bravado, should be treated as idle nonsense. The worst class of notice is certainly the vexatious, a pure specimen of which we remember to have seen in the vicinity of Hawes Water, which proclaimed that "If any one dares to touch this boat," &c., and which was signed "The *Lowther*." Such a display of arrogance must frequently effect the very reverse that it is intended to cause, for any "reading party" from the universities or body of light-hearted pedestrians in a mischievous mood would scarcely pass such an offensive challenge—for it is little else—without taking it up. The vexatious notice is one of the feudal remains that still exist amongst us.

The Political Economy Club has lately been celebrating the centenary of Adam Smith's most celebrated work. There is a story about him and his old house-keeper which may be commended to painters in search of topics. He was very fond of lump sugar, and he stood excessively in awe of the good old lady. When the tea equipage was upon the table, the philosopher might be seen waiting and watching till her back was turned, and then furtively seizing a lump of his own sugar. At least, that is the story which dwells in our memory. It would make as good a subject for a picture as Pope and Lady Montague, or Johnson and Goldsmith, or a scene from the "Good-natured Man," or James Watt as a boy fiddle-faddling with his mother's tea kettle.

The following anecdote is told of the late Sultan of Turkey:—

One day, suddenly turning to his first chamberlain, Abdul-Aziz said—

"I want a clock made like this."

And, as he spoke, he extended his arms, and then struck his right arm with his left.

The chamberlain bowed, and retired completely puzzled. He dared not ask for an explanation, and his colleagues could not help him, but advised a consultation with the Sultan's painter in ordinary, a man of great intelligence, and one who thoroughly understood his sovereign's peculiarities.

The artist proved equal to the occasion.

"In what room," he inquired, "was the Sultan when he gave this order?"

"In the third saloon."

"Very good. There is in that room a chimneypiece about as wide as the space indicated by the extension of the Sultan's arms; the supporters of this chimneypiece are covered with incrustations resembling the embroidery on his sleeve. He wants a clock uniting these conditions."

And so saying, the intelligent painter took a pencil and paper, and produced a sketch of the article required.

This was taken by the relieved official to the Sultan, who grimly observed—

"You were too stupid to understand me; you have been to my painter, who has interpreted the message you conveyed to him as a porter carries a trunk, of the contents of which he is ignorant."

Corn for Bread.

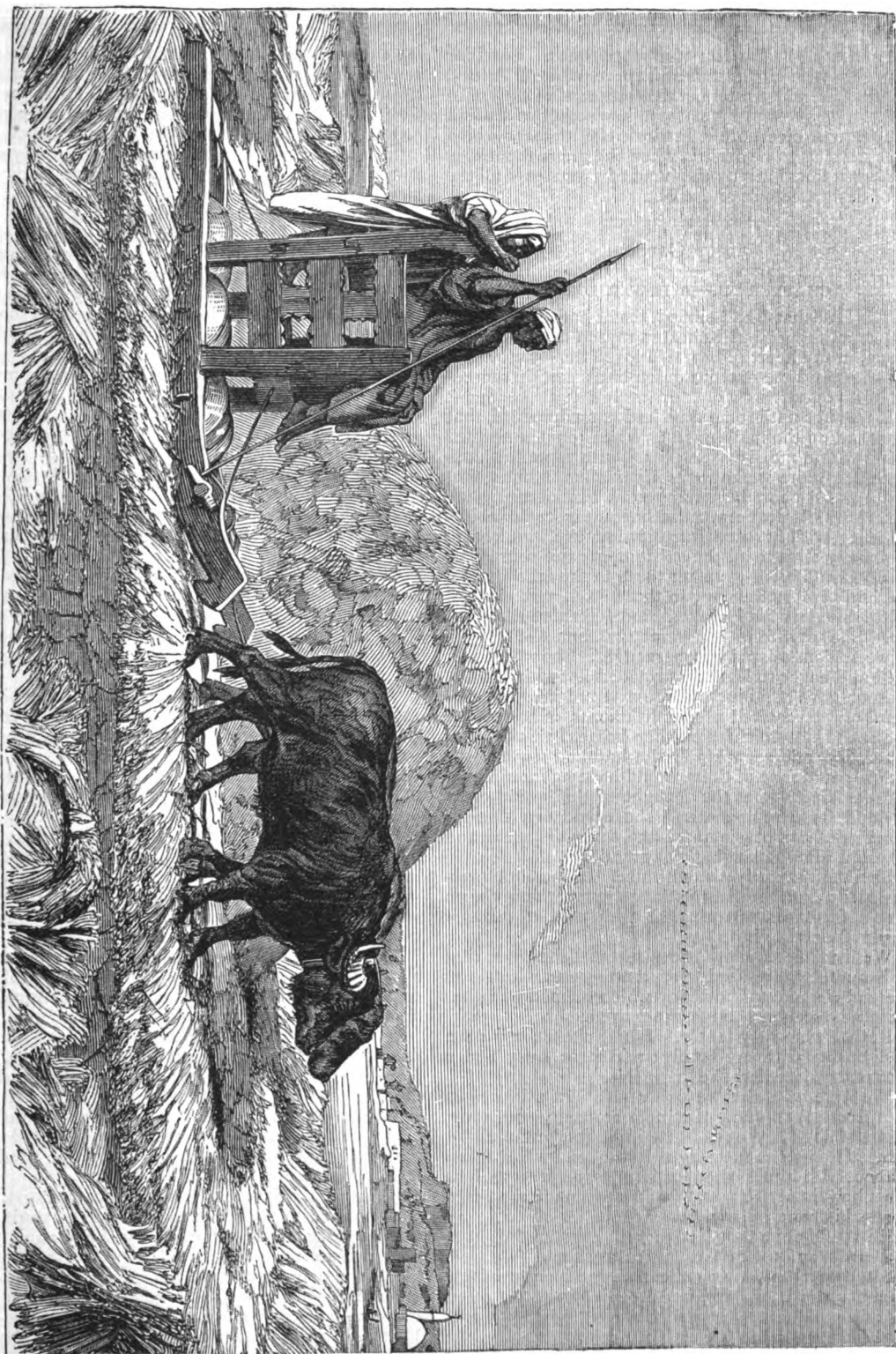
PEOPLES might well be divided into two classes—the go-aheads and the stand-stills. As a matter of course, the Americans would be selected as the leading nation of the go-aheads; while as prime representative of the stand-stills any Eastern nation would do, save and except the Japanese, who no sooner woke up to the fact that the Western nations were far before them in civilization, in their manufactures, machinery, and munitions of war, than they set-to to make up for lost time. As a rule, though, throughout the East it is singular how the people tread on in the same well-worn rut that their fathers used before them. The Indian grinds his curry in the same clumsy way; the Syrian woman uses the same awkward hand mill, and the Chaldee the same awkward plough that his ancestors did two or three thousand years ago. What a change, though, has taken place in threshing out corn; and how differently this is carried out in the West and in the East! For the most part the threshing-floor and flail have disappeared, and one rarely hears the thump, thump, thump on the straw, as Jarge or Giles flogs away to free the grain from the ear. On the contrary, at farm after farm now, in the autumn, one listens to the hum of the steam engine, with its whirling wheels, and the beat of the threshing machine—one which now, as the sheaves of straw are tossed into its hungry maw, threshes the corn, winnows it from chaff, measures it, and runs it into sacks, which have only to be tied up and carried to the cart; while the broken straw is raised by an elevator into a stack.

"Why, sir," said a farmer to the writer, the other day, "I grow now more corn on my farm—the glebe—than used to be grown in the whole parish. They couldn't thresh it now without machines."

The mode of threshing out the grain by trampling it under the hoofs of cattle was universal in ancient times, and has not disappeared yet from the earth. The ancient Biblical law forbade the Jew to muzzle the ox that trampled out the grain; and even now, in Chili, horses are turned in, and driven around as if in a circus, till they have accomplished the task. As a matter of course, a great deal of the corn is broken and bruised, and unfit for seed, while in addition it shows in the flour that is made from it a very large proportion of impurity, such as unavoidably is gathered up with it. This cattle threshing is, however, very popular in these hot countries, where the lassitude induced by the climate tends to excite a dislike to any laborious toil.

In Egypt, however, the people do the work more sedately. They move on a kind of sled with three rollers, fitted with irons, which turn on axles, and are drawn by two buffaloes over the roadway made of sheaves, spread for the purpose in a level spot. This mode is, of course, very wasteful, tedious, and inconvenient. It destroys the chaff, and injures the quality of the grain.

Gérôme, whose painting we have copied, is one of the



THRESHING IN EGYPT.

most accomplished artists of modern times. Familiar thoroughly with ancient life and the remains of history, a pupil of the old masters, a deep student of nature in the East, he gives to his paintings, whether of ancient or modern subjects, that intrinsic faithfulness which leaves nothing to be desired when the great thought is transferred to canvas by the hand of a master in all the arts of design, colour, and effect.

Queer Cards.

CHAPTER XI.—A LOWER DEEP.

"I KNEW that I had sinned, that I had done a bad, cruel thing; but I cheated myself into the belief that as, in my heart of hearts, I loved her—that as, in hers, she loved me—so our union had a certain sacredness of its own.

"It was not until some time had passed, indeed, that I reasoned on the matter at all. When remorse seemed stirring within me, I would plunge into some fresh excitement. Were we happy? Even then, I knew that our life was a poor, beggarly round of material pleasures, in which no permanent happiness could abide. Still, Lucy, with her rich, impulsive nature, was keenly and acutely alive to all the excitements and sensations of a London life. I gave her these to the full.

"I had plenty of money in those days, and spent it freely. She was fond of dress, and I granted her every wish. She was fond—passionately fond—of music; and we seldom missed an opera night. She was sharp-witted and eager to learn: I provided her with masters who soon gave her much of the external bearing, and several of the required accomplishments, of a lady.

"She did not much regret her home, I think. Her mother had not been kind; she had had few friends, poor girl, and none of them would have acknowledged her now. Sometimes the thought of this would cross her mind for a moment, and she would cry bitterly; but her grief was passing, girl-like, easily dispelled, and she would soon be singing away again.

"She had naturally a sweet voice. It was not powerful, indeed; but there was a strange, sympathetic charm in it—a freshness of tone and quality—that made it pleasant indeed to hear her.

"We lived in a quiet little place at Brompton, that was beautifully furnished too; and there was a natural taste and elegance about Lucy which seemed to fit her for the new scene in which she moved.

"But we were very lonely. I had chosen my part. I had broken with my family; and poor Lucy had a bitter pang when first she knew this.

"We were at a theatre one night. In a box right opposite us sat an uncle of mine, a colonel in the army, whose pet boy I had once been. The thought of all his kindness to me, the memory of how often he had taken me about with him to shoot or hunt, how generous, how loving, how manly he was, this thought made me yearn to press his hand once more.

"He would not acknowledge me. He stared right at me, sternly, and took no notice of my bow. We were close together on leaving the theatre; he passed me without a word. I left Lucy for a moment, followed him, and passionately implored him to speak to me.

"'I have no control over your movements, sir,' he answered. 'If you choose to flaunt this woman before

the eyes of ladies and gentlemen, you may do so. If you choose to degrade yourself and disgrace your family, you may do so. For myself, I only associate with gentlemen, and you have forfeited your right to be considered one.'

"He passed on. I was not angry. I was only shamed and sad. I fear I spoke roughly and impatiently to poor Lucy.

"When we reached our home, the girl had a fit of hysterical weeping, and implored me to send her away.

"From this time forth there was little happiness in our house. Lucy felt acutely the shame she had brought upon me; heaven knows I felt it bitterly enough myself. Pleasures began to pall on her. Sometimes she would refuse to go out, and would sit drearily by the fireside, moaning terribly.

"'I wish to heaven you had never seen me!' she said, one night.

"I was nervous—I was miserable. I answered, roughly, like a coward—

"'I wish to heaven I never had!'

"The poor girl gave a cry, and fell back fainting.

"Matters grew worse. Sometimes we would fiercely quarrel. There was no real happiness to be hoped for in the way of life I had chosen, and I began to feel this myself.

"For one thing, we were very lonely. The few friends I still retained were not fit companions for a man who, despite his sin, had still something pure left in him. They were dissipated men—ay, and cold and heartless. Lucy shrank from their bold gaze, and grew frightened at their loose talk.

"The poor little village girl! I know not which of us suffered most. I know that both of us were very, very miserable, and that I often looked with a strange longing at the bright, sharp edge of my razors. One gash—a moment's pain! and then? No; I had always this means of ending it, and I shrank from using it. I think that my sin had robbed me even of my courage.

"Her temper changed; it lost its sweetness day by day. She became fretful, and would often speak in a harsh, querulous voice. She lost her relish for all which once amused her. Often, grown desperate, I would leave the house, almost determined never to enter it again.

"Hitherto I had always been a temperate man; but as my nervousness, as my weariness, as my misery increased, I sought help from the bottle. I drank deeply. The crowning horror, though, was yet to come.

"One night I came home very late. I had been drinking. I staggered upstairs. There was a light in Lucy's room. I was full of shame; I scarcely dared to face the poor girl whom I had wronged; but still I went into the room. And, as I live—as I live—there was my Lucy—drunk! Her eyes were heavy and dull; she laughed wildly when I spoke to her. She tried to rise from her seat, and fell in doing so.

"The golden light of the morning came into the room with its accusing splendour, and found us staring sadly at each other. I think it can have shone on no two forlorn creatures.

"Strange pictures rose before my bloodshot eyes; strange fancies floated through my heated brain. Clearly—as clearly as I see you now before me—I saw Bartleigh again; saw the churchyard, saw the moorland stream, saw the Lucy of a year ago!

"How bright and pure was the village rose that I had torn from its stem! Her eyes, how full of innocent laughter! Her cheeks, how fresh and ruddy with health! She sat there now, a profane, polluted thing. A horrible craving, a fiendish desire to leap upon her, to strangle her, stirred within me.

"On her part, too, there was a rising anger. A passion of resentment looked out through the eyes that were dull and dim with drink; the bitterness of indignation spoke through the voice that was so husky and hoarse.

"You might have known that it would come to this," she said. "You needn't have given in so soon. I wouldn't, if I'd been a man, let alone a gentleman. I'd have borne a little longer with a poor girl before I took to the drink. I dare say I was provoking, whites. It hasn't been a very pleasant life you've brought me to; and waiting of a night to hear your step doesn't make a girl over-happy."

"The light of the morning grew brighter, and the sunshine came full upon her face. It was a haggard, worn face now; no girlish beauty, no country freshness left in it. It was a face—God help me!—it was a face the like of which you can see any night in London streets.

"My anger died silently away as I gazed at her, but a loathing arose in its place. And she saw it; and, with a last touch of womanly feeling, she passed her hands through her dishevelled hair, smoothing it down, and then glanced at the mirror. As I glanced at it, too—as we saw ourselves, and each other—the sense of our great degradation hushed us both. We had both fallen too low to be angry any more.

"We had better part," she said. "There can't be much more love between us, and it's dreary to pretend it."

"It's too late or too soon," I said, "to part. Our two lives are tied together. We must live them out, or end them."

"Came back the wicked craving to do murder; and she read it in my eyes, and laughed at me, as though she knew it was cowardice alone which held back my hand.

"I had heard the same kind of laughter often enough before; I have heard it often since. Harsh and hoarse; you may hear it any night almost. There isn't a London policeman but knows it, or a man about town but knows it; and there is no shriek, there is no scream so horrible, so full of despair.

"I could stay beside her no longer. I rose to go.

"With a hoarse cry, she sprang at me, and got her fingers round my throat. I felt them tighten like a vice, and, in the mere instinct of self-preservation, I beat her off.

"The people of the house came running in as she fell back, exhausted by the frenzy of her rage, fainting. It was not our first quarrel, and they showed but little surprise when, after telling them to take care of her, I seized my hat and staggered downstairs.

"I went out into the street, and walked confusedly away, a reckless and desperate man. It was long before I could form any plan. There was a ringing in my ears; a cloud was before my eyes. Men looked round angrily as I pushed against them; then laughed, as at a drunken man, or told me to go home and go to sleep again."

CHAPTER XII.—WAGES.

AS the morning advanced, and as the streets became more crowded, such remarks occurred more frequently. Youngsters walking to their offices would nod and wink to each other as I passed them, and ere long I could hear their laughter behind me.

"Looking into the shop windows and gazing at my own reflection there, I saw that I was squalid, unwashed, unshaven; that my eyes were bloodshot, with dark hollow circles round each; that my whole look was that of a man who had but just reeled from a late debauch.

"I was well dressed, indeed—that is to say, my clothes were good; but my coat sleeves were greasy, and foul with stains from leaning on tavern bars; my hat was battered—why go on with the catalogue?

"I looked, to be brief, just what I was—a drunken, degraded, and most miserable gentleman. Gentleman? Well, I began to doubt whether I was even that.

"With the loss of cleanliness and propriety, all self-respect seemed also to have departed. I found myself shuffling along, as I had often seen beggars do, with sidelong gait, crouching form, deprecating eyes.

"The morning grew lovelier and lovelier. There had been a little rain during the night; and now the sunshine, striking on the puddles in the streets, gave even to them a certain beauty. The caged larks that hung outside the houses here and there felt the genial warmth, and burst out into shrill torrents of song.

"I noticed trifles like these as I walked on. Again and again I tried to force myself to serious thought as to my future course, but all my efforts were in vain. Just when, by an immense exertion of will, I began to concentrate my thoughts on the subject, just then I would notice some little girl selling flowers, some waggoner driving his team; and my whole attention, the whole force of my mind, would be at once diverted to that waggoner or that little girl. Then I would murmur sadly, and fancy, timidly, that my brains were failing me, and shed idle tears over imaginary griefs; whilst my own grief, my own shame and misery, seemed to be things long passed, and of no immediate concernment.

"Aimlessly as I walked—now fast, as though a foe were following; now slow, as though I only wished to loiter in the sunshine—I had gone far before I felt any physical fatigue. I had gone as far as Hampstead Heath before I began to perceive that want of food and want of sleep were making me giddy and sick.

"Instead of going to Jack Straw's Castle, or some other comfortable inn, and making a good dinner—which was my simple and rational course—I turned into a low pothouse on the outskirts of the Heath, and called for beer and some bread and cheese.

"I think the dirt and squalor seemed to suit me. I think I was dimly conscious that at any respectable hotel my custom would be rather shunned than otherwise. I know, at any rate, that I felt a certain pleasure when I saw that the walls were dark with smoke, that the tables were sticky with beer, that the fellows in the room looked ruffianly and coarse.

"I swallowed, hurriedly, a few morsels of bread and cheese; but I seemed to loathe my food. I took a deep draught at the beer; it was vile stuff, I thought.

I ordered some brandy; it was brought, and it did me good.

"Ha! better this, than your miserable beer; something to brace up a man's nerves with in this! I felt stronger, more cheerful, more collected, more courageous; not for long, however, for the reaction soon set in.

"My head dropped wearily, wearily on the deal table. It was in vain that I tried to rouse myself once more; all the strength had gone out of me, and I sank into a deep slumber.

"It was a deep slumber, but not dreamless. Distinct visions, definite dreams, indeed, I had not; but the payment had now to be made for the life that I had been leading of late. Oh, throbbing agony of the hot brain! oh, thrills and spasms that shot through it, with cruel heat, and returned yet again, hotter and more terrible each time! Weights of unknown power and force seemed now to press upon my head; and anon they were removed, and I seemed to swim, to float through space, lightly and swiftly.

"Thus, as it seemed, whole days would pass by; yet I knew the while that the seeming hours were but moments. Horribly did I wish to cry out, not for help, but from sheer agony; but the voice was gone. Then the little consciousness that I had still retained departed, and left nothing but a dull, dumb pain.

"And when I awoke, the gas was burning in the room. I had been swooning or sleeping through the greater part of a long summer's day. Taking some loose coin from my pocket, I paid my reckoning, and walked away. Whither? And to what end? To lose myself in London. To tread her cruel streets until I dropped. Or to reach the great bridge—the great, terrible bridge; the grand, solemn bridge—and to hurl myself into the foul stream which, in its ebb and flow, has carried up or down the corpses of so many wretches who were not worse than I. I swear it—who were not so bad!

"There was another corpse with whose tresses the stream would yet dally and play—over whose cold and clammy lips it would pass and repass. That corpse—I knew not if it was a corpse as yet, but the end was clear—that corpse would be the corpse of the woman whom I had wronged.

"I saw her now, as she was; not as my hot fancy had painted her of yore—I saw her a simple-hearted little girl, loving and kind, easily influenced, easily led astray, not easily to be reclaimed.

"Reclaimed? Who was to reclaim her? I? I, who had wrecked and ruined her; I, myself depraved and despairing; I, whom not one of my family, of my old friends, would now acknowledge—I was to reclaim her!

"I laughed wildly as the idea crossed my mind—wildly, and with utter scorn. Not any longer could I cheat myself with lies into the belief that we might both mend, and still have a chance; not any longer could I delude myself into hope, or even the semblance of it.

"No. The thing was done. It was all over, now; over, the first fond, yearning love for her; over, the sad, indulgent pity; over, even the loathing and the hate. She was what I had made her! And I walked on fiercely and swiftly through the streets; thought of her no more; sought only for one more excitement, one more night of madness, ere death.

"The wonderful west was waking as I went through Regent-street and the Haymarket. Quiet folks had been in bed for some time past, in bed and asleep. The lights were all out by this time at the old house in Warwickshire. Not a soul would be awake in the old Devonshire village.

"A bright and beautiful evening had followed on a very lovely day. The air was now warm and gentle; very deep and clear seemed the sky when I looked up; and the moon, which was nearly at the full, shone with a broad lustre upon the white streets.

"There is one precise moment at which the west seems to be transfigured. Five minutes ago, the Haymarket was dreary, and comparatively deserted; and now, now it is awake, it is alive with a horrible life, its pulse beats hotly and fastly with fever; it palpitates, it throbs.

"Often—to my shame, to my sorrow—often had I seen this magical change; at first, with a feeling not unlike fear; at last, with a kind of forlorn indifference and dim interest. How miserable is its gaiety! Those red and raddled cheeks, when had they blushed last? Those voluble tongues, how long was it since they had uttered a kindly or honest word?

"Boys were there—absolute boys, fresh from the playing fields at Eton, perchance—joining in the foul orgies of the place now, whilst their mothers, at home, were dreaming of them—how tenderly! And old men—pah!

"I leant against a post, and watched the human wave sweep past me. Was there one in all that crowd who really liked the life? Was there one in all that crowd who was other than very miserable? All sense of my own pain gone—all anxiety about my own lot departed. I waited, and watched, and mused wearily.

"I was so utterly beaten, that when I found myself—as I soon did—almost penniless, I do not think the shock affected me. My pocket-book, containing notes to a somewhat large amount—containing, indeed, almost all the money I possessed in the world—was gone. Probably it had been stolen from me at the Hampstead pothouse whilst I slept; at any rate, it was not to be found.

"Did it matter?"

The Man in the Open Air.

ALL who look around with inquiring eyes in their rambles through the country know full well the nest of the trap spiders, and have admired the beautiful and ingenious formation of the subtle devices to entrap the prey of the demon insects, watching with eager eyes in the dark, cavernous recesses of their haunts for the approach of their guileless victims. But although we have in the British Islands several species of these spiders whose webs are woven, not so much for entanglement as to warn the destroyer of the vicinity of the unconscious fly, we have none that carry out the notions of a trap with the finish and refinement of those found at Uitenhagen, Cape Colony. A few specimens of the nests of the latter were recently shown at the Entomological Society. Usually the nests are built on the ground, but in these instances they had been contrived in cavities in the bark of trees, with a small piece of bark as trap-door. By this arrangement, discovery

of the nest is almost impossible when the door is shut.

A very proper movement has been made by Mr. Alfred Newton, of Magdalene College, Cambridge, who writes us to give the greatest possible circulation to the fact that as these islands will most likely be visited shortly by that very beautiful and extraordinary bird, Pallas's sand-grouse, he would ask that they should be afforded every possible protection during their stay, so that the discreditable slaughter which attended their immigration of 1863 may not be repeated. He reminds us that in that year this bird bred both in Holland and Denmark, and that there are many parts of this country, particularly on the eastern coast, just as well suited to its habits and wants as the sandhills of Jutland and the Dutch Dunes. Furthermore, that no possible scientific discovery can follow from the destruction even of a single example. Museums are well supplied with specimens, and the structure, both external and internal, of this remarkable bird has been sufficiently well studied.

It is a pity that hitherto there has been no discovery by which we could preserve the exquisite hues of living insects, the most beautiful colours of many quitting them shortly after death. What can be more lovely than the soft green hue of the great green grasshopper (*Acrida viridissima*), the largest of the three grasshoppers now beginning to make their appearance; and yet we can scarcely secure a specimen and instantaneously dispossess it of life, than, as if to punish us for its destruction, it becomes a perfectly unsightly object for our cabinet. You must not search for this insect in the grass, for it is a tree-loving creature, and as its colour closely resembles the foliage, it is a practised eye alone that can detect its presence; but, when obtained, no more interesting object for the microscope can be met with. Its "gizzard" especially cannot fail of attracting attention, and eliciting wonder and surprise. There is another grasshopper that affects trees (*Meconuna varia*), the wing-covers of the male being bare of the stridulating apparatus; so that, unlike its fellows, it is quite silent. Then there is the wart-biter (*Decticus grisens*), so called because its bite is supposed by the Swedish peasant to have the effect of destroying the wart. These must not be confounded with the locusts, of which, happily, we meet with but few in England; but yet every year a sufficient number of examples are found to prove the possibility of their existence amongst us in yet greater numbers. It has been ascertained that, in those countries in which this pest is so formidable, not only pigs and poultry get fat on the invaders, but that the inhabitants of the Rocky Mountains, where the districts suffer so lamentably, are recommended to assist in their extermination by eating them. Herein lurks no grim joke, for we learn that a banquet has been organized at St. Louis, at which locusts cooked in various ways were served up, and were pronounced excellent, particularly when made into soup. "It would seem," says a writer in *Chambers'*, "like poetical justice, that the destroyers should be eaten in the land where they had devoured every green thing." There can exist little fear of a lack of this "delicacy" in those lands in which we read of railway trains being stopped by

masses of locusts piled up like driven snow along the line. A Frenchman has discovered that pounded locusts, squeezed up into round lumps, are an attractive bait for sea and other fish. Scarcely, however, a discovery, as most books upon angling treat of the grasshopper as a killing bait for chub and other fish.

We have hitherto been making our notes in the fields upon tablets of artificial ivory, which is produced by a compound of negative gun cotton dissolved in an alcoholic solution of camphor, afterwards submitted to hydraulic pressure. We are, however, now told that its manufacture is not free from great risk, in so ambiguous a way that it really suggests the possibility of the several articles formed from it going off in a manner which ensures its own gratuitous report. This is certainly far from an assuring impression, when we reflect that billiard balls, amongst other objects of utility and amusement, are composed of this novel chemical admixture. Think of the explosion of three balls in a crowded billiard-room while making a cannon, and marking the marker as well as the players in an exciting match of 1,000 up! The conversion of the hitherto harmless instruments of a game into detonating balls, which may go—not only go off but on the table, and convert all present into a preparation for funeral shells, is by no means a pleasant accompaniment to a tournament of this nature. The old-fashioned duel with locked doors and hair-triggers would be nothing to it. But this new element of danger, as in steeplechasing, may be welcomed as an additional incentive to our English pluck. We have but now spoken of poetic justice regarding the mastication of locusts; this striking the striker may be cited as another instance of retributive justice. Perhaps in lawn billiards and croquet in the open air the explosive nature of the projectiles might be turned to an effective account, if this peculiarity were reserved for the close of the evening, when darkness is setting in; in which case cards of invitation might end with the familiar announcement that the entertainment would conclude with a grand pyrotechnic display.

The Madness of George III.

ONE day Miss Burney was walking in the garden at Kew, when she saw the King, whom she supposed to be very insane, coming towards her. To avoid meeting him, she ran off at full speed. But the King was not to be disappointed of his chance of meeting a pretty woman, and so ran after her. The King's attendants were alarmed, and ran after him; but the King proved the swiftest runner, and soon caught up with the charming Queen's maid, and, throwing his arms round her, kissed her. He then informed her he was as well as ever he had been in his life, and that he wished to talk with her on affairs of State.

Miss Burney was at first terribly frightened, but soon gained her self-possession, and enjoyed one of the most pleasant interviews with the King that she ever had while in the service of the Royal household.

Another time, when the King was breakfasting at Kew, the great scarcity of beef, which was then prevailing in England, became the subject of conversation.

"Why do not people plant some beef?" asked the King.

Upon being told that beef could not be raised from the seed, he seemed still incredulous. He took some bits of beefsteak, and went into the garden and planted them. The next morning he went out to see if they had sprouted, and found there some snails. Thinking they were oxen, he was heard calling out—

"Here they are, here they are, Charlotte, horns and all!"

Age at last battered his decaying tabernacle, and his life became more Lear-like as the twilight shadows began to fall. His sympathies seemed to take a wider range, and his charity to gather new sweetness, as the evening of age came on.

In 1786, a poor insane woman, named Margaret Nicholson, attempted to assassinate him as he was in the act of stepping from his carriage. The King, on finding that she was insane, remembered his own frailty, spoke of her with great pity, and tried to disarm the popular prejudice against her.

In 1790, John Frith, an insane man, attempted the King's life, and another lunatic shot at him in 1800, for each of whom the King was moved to extreme pity when he understood the nature of their malady.

One gloomy day a messenger came to the King's room to announce that his daughter Amelia had breathed her last.

This calamity was too much for the King: reason began to waver, and soon took its flight.

"This was caused by poor Amelia," he was heard saying, as the shadows deepened and the dreary winter of age came stealing on.

"Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!"

This was in 1810. The remaining ten years of his life were passed, with the exception of few brief intervals, in the long night of mindlessness, and the last eight years were still more deeply shadowed by the loss of sight.

In May, 1811, he appeared once outside of the castle of Windsor, and henceforth the people saw him no more.

Withdrawn from all eyes but those that watched his necessities, in silence and in darkness, crownless, throneless, sceptreless, there was for him neither sun, moon, nor stars, empire, wife, nor child.

The seasons came and went—the spring-time lighted up the hills and autumn withered the leaves, the summer sunshine dreamed in the flowers and the snows of winter fell; battles were fought; Waterloo changed the front of the political world; Napoleon fell; the nation was filled with festive rejoicings over the battles of Vittoria, the Pyrenees, and Toulouse—but he was oblivious of all.

His sister died, his beloved queen died, his son, the Duke of Kent, died—but he knew it not.

He was often confined in a padded room; his beard grew long; he seemed like a full personification of the character of Lear.

Once he was heard repeating to himself the sad lines in "Samson Agonistes":—

"Oh, dark, dark, dark! Amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark! Total eclipse,
Without all hope of day!"

Some incidents of this period are very touching. One day, while his attendants were leading him along

one of the passages of the castle, he heard some one draw quickly aside.

"Who is there?" asked the King.

He was answered in a well-known voice.

"I am now blind," said the King.

"I am very sorry, please your Majesty."

"But," continued the King, "I am quite resigned; for what have we to do in this world but to suffer as well as to perform the will of the Almighty?"

He at one time supposed that George III. was some other person than himself, who was now dead. He professed to feel great respect for the deceased monarch.

He was once heard saying—

"I must have a new suit of clothes, and I will have them black, in memory of George III."

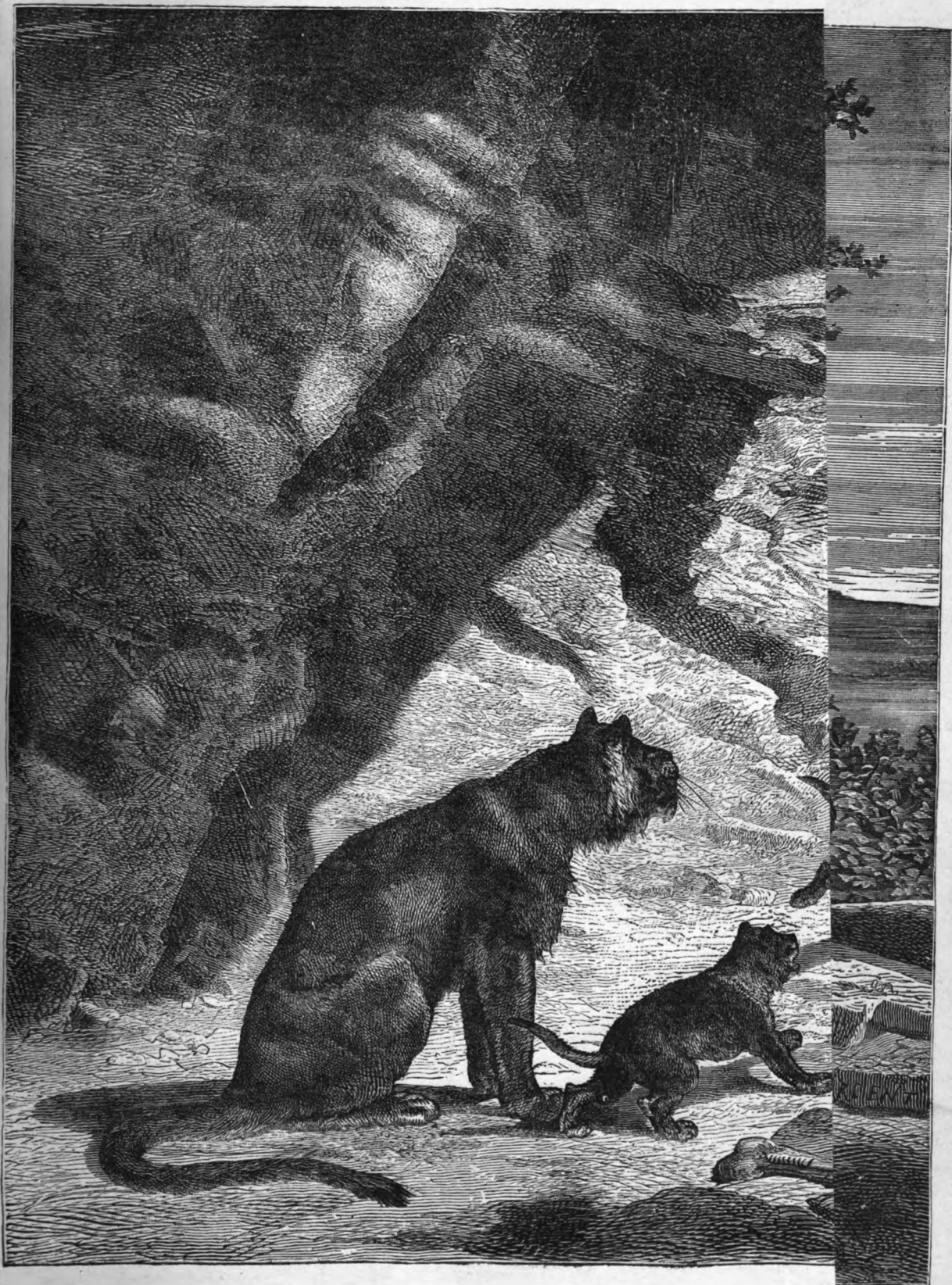
Birds of Passage.

WE are not much given to thinking of the difficulties experienced by our birds of passage during rough and boisterous weather. Requiring a moderate wind to aid their flight, they suffer much distress from contrary gales, and are even constrained to seek for shelter in the most unexpected situations. Dr. Saxby thus relates finding a party of these distressed voyagers:—

"I remember one night," says he, "about the end of October, being suddenly overtaken in the hills by a tremendous gale from the N.E., accompanied by complete darkness and sleety rain. Stopping to trim my lantern under a solitary plantie cruive" (a circular patch of ground in the open, about three or four yards in diameter, surrounded by a loose wall, and used by the inhabitants for growing the young cabbage plants) "upon the hillside, I heard a peculiar twittering sound within, and, on looking over the wall, saw to my astonishment that the ground was thickly covered—in some parts literally paved—with bramblings and chaffinches. The sight was a singular one indeed; the poor benighted travellers had chosen the only shelter that was to be had, and seemed to be worn out with fatigue, not one of them attempting flight, or even moving more than its head, which always followed every movement of the lantern."

It is no uncommon occurrence to find quantities of various immigrant birds collected in the fields near our coasts, after having encountered stormy winds in their passage. Misty or rainy weather, too, interferes with their progress as much as wind, the wet clogging their feathers, and the thick, misty atmosphere apparently causing them uncertainty as to the direction in which to proceed. In this emergency they frequently take refuge on trading or fishing vessels, or descend in less friendly places, tempted by the glare of lighthouses, or the gas of some large town or city.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.—"POND'S EXTRACT."—This wonderful Pain Destroyer and Healer seems likely to acquire equal popularity in this country to that it has already won in America. So rapidly are sales increasing, that New and Extensive Premises have been taken at 482, OXFORD-STREET, where every convenience is now provided for the European and Colonial demand.



Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER XVIII.—FALLING INTO A TRAP.

DIRECTLY the friends quitted the house, they hailed a Hansom and sprang into it.

"To Victoria-street—drive like mad!" Harcourt shouted to the driver.

"You're going to your chambers?" asked Agnew.

"No, idiot—to my chambers, indeed! To Pagnell's. If he has claimed this money, and been refused on the ground of conspiracy and fraud, don't you know what'll happen next? He will be seized, and—who knows?—may make a clean breast of it. There is not a moment to spare."

He was so impressed with this, that although the horse was bounding along, its haunches rising and falling, and swaying from side to side before their eyes, he kept lifting the trap overhead, and shouting—

"Drive! Why don't you drive, man?"

By the time Victoria-street was reached, the horse was in a steam and a lather. The men leaped out. Harcourt span a coin in the air, which the driver adroitly caught, and they dashed into the house together.

So great was their haste that they did not notice that some one lurked in the shadow—a porter, on the opposite side of the road—and watched them with ferret eyes.

Captain Pagnell's chambers were similar in style to Harcourt's, but rather more luxuriously furnished. Before the fire stood the captain himself—a showy man, with a fierce eye, a firm mouth, crisp black hair, and a manner full of confidence and determination. He did not express any surprise at the entrance of his friends, with consternation strongly marked on their faces.

"You know what has happened, Pagnell?" demanded Harcourt, abruptly.

"I do, my boy," was his rejoinder.

"They have refused our claim for the *Hannah*."

"Yes."

"On serious grounds."

"I know it."

"And you have no alarm? You are under no apprehension? The thing is already in the papers. You know what will happen next? They will get a warrant for your apprehension—"

"Mine? Come, I like that! *Ours*, you mean."

"No, I mean what I say. You alone have been seen in this matter. You have represented the firm, and, as you know, have been paid double for the risk you have run. What should they know of us?"

Captain Pagnell leaned his arms on the back of a chair, and looked the interrogator full in the face.

"What should they know of the whole matter, if it comes to that?" he asked. "There's been treachery somewhere, and I don't envy the traitor. I repeat—I don't envy the traitor."

"You don't mean—you can't mean—that we—" Harcourt began.

"That you've betrayed me to save yourselves?" the other interrupted. "No; because I don't see how that would have worked. It was to your interest that all should go smoothly, and that the *Hannah* should sink, and we should share the plunder. But, I repeat, there

has been treachery somewhere, and let the traitors look out!"

"Nonsense, man! What treachery can there have been, except on the part of those you employed for the job? Can you trust them?"

"Can I trust any man? Not I; but this I can do. I can see that these men, picked up at New York, and left at the Cape to find their way back there again to receive their part of the booty, are not *very* likely to have troubled themselves greatly to defeat our plans. No, the treachery's nearer home. Where it comes from I don't know; but I say again, let the traitors look out! And now you wonder I'm here taking it all so cool and quiet. I'll tell you why. They may get out their warrant of arrest, or whatever they like; but this job was so well done that it can have only one result. The twenty thousand will have to be paid, and there will be damages to follow if they dare lay a finger upon me or detain me against my will."

There was a tumbler of brandy on the table at his side. He took a gulp, which for a moment dyed his face a deeper crimson, and drew himself erect, as if in defiance of the whole world.

But neither his courage nor his confidence was shared by his companions.

"This is a bad business," said Harcourt; "something has oozed out more than we are aware of. There is only one safe course for you."

"And that is—"

"Flight."

The captain swore a great oath.

"That would be mending matters with a vengeance," he said. "What! Run at the first blush of danger, and let all the world know I'd something to fly from? Sacrifice all I've tried for? Not I. But I understand your disinterested advice; while I'm here there's always the danger that I may turn Queen's evidence against the rest. When I'm gone, your safety's secured. Thank you. No! I shall not split while the rest are true to me; neither shall I run while I've a chance to stay. Courage, man, courage wins the battle of life; it's carried me so far, and I shall trust to it for the rest."

Again he lifted the brandy to his lips, and took a draught which suffused his face purple.

Harcourt knew well enough what that meant. The captain had the courage of a bull-dog; but he stood in great peril, and he knew it, and felt the solace the liquor gave him.

It was in the pause of the moment, and while Pagnell was in the act of replacing his glass, that a peculiar sound arrested the attention of all three. It was a sharp click. The captain knew in a minute what had happened.

"Thunder!" he exclaimed; "that was a key turned in the lock."

He dashed at the door fiercely, and found his suspicions justified.

The door was locked. They were prisoners.

Without a moment's reflection, acting purely upon impulse and a brute instinct, he instantly turned upon Harcourt, and, seizing him by the throat, drove him furiously backwards, till both fell with a crash to the ground.

"Devil!" he cried, foaming at the mouth, "this is your work. You have sold me to serve some fiendish purpose of your own. Curse you!"

He had the fingers of both hands about the man's windpipe; his right knee driving into his chest, while he struggled to get the leverage of his own feet so as to dash out the brains of the supposed traitor.

Randolph darted to his friend's aid, and clutched at the thick locks of the infuriated captain; but his strength was only as that of a child. He was powerless against muscular superiority governed by momentary fury.

"Pagnell!" he screamed out, "you will murder him!"

Like the echo of that cry, a scream, shrill, loud, and prolonged, rang through the apartment.

Randolph turned in amazement, and even the desperate man seemed to hear and to pause in his fell purpose. The scream had come from the lips of a woman, and Randolph beheld to his amazement the bright form of Zerina, the Italian's daughter, as she rushed from an inner apartment, and made towards them.

Dropping upon her knees, she interposed between the captain and his victim, and with tears and entreaties besought him to desist. Nor this alone. In desperation she tore at the hands grasping Harcourt's throat, and bit them with her teeth, while her hair in its profuse mass blinded the man, and baffled him in his murderous attempt.

So at length she had her way.

Pagnell sprang to his feet with a curse, and spurning the prostrate body with his foot, suffered himself to be led away.

With generous impetuosity Randolph Agnew pleaded and argued for his friend.

"What purpose could be served by treachery?" he demanded. "Why should they have ventured into danger, from which it was so much the interest of both to keep clear?"

These pleadings—momentary as they were—had their apparent force.

"P'raps I've been hasty," the captain said; "but, hush! Let me see the meaning of all this."

He had not long to wait, to satisfy his curiosity. There was a trampling of feet upon the stairs; voices without in sharp altercation; then the key was turned, and the door thrown open.

Arthur Pembrose entered, followed by half a dozen officers—the boy, Joe Ember, the spy, slinking in the background.

"That is the man, Geoffrey Pagnell, named in your warrant," said Pembrose. "Take him on a charge of conspiring with others to defraud."

While the captain confronted his foes, Harcourt scrambled to his feet. The face of the accuser darkened as their eyes met.

"Your turn next," said Arthur.

CHAPTER XIX.—THE TENDER PASSION.

PAUSE we for a chapter to consider the claims of beauty in its autumnal prime, and to observe the influence of the master passion, love, on the tender and susceptible heart.

It was observed by the household—the critics of the servants' hall, that severest of tribunals—that a change had come over Aunt Effra. The acidity in her nature had, so to speak, become candied. That haughty spirit of maidenhood, which had resented the very existence of the tenderer emotions, had yielded to a sympathetic recognition of their influence over human nature.

She ceased to domineer, was by turns gay and haughty, and the victim of fits of loneliness and melancholy.

It was irreverently remarked by the boy in buttons that "somethink had come to the old un," which remark, fortunately for him, did not reach the "old un's" ears. Had it done so, it might have been the worse for Buttons, even if it had not cost him the garment from which he received his designation.

Yet he was right.

Something *had* come to Aunt Effra. Love had come to her, waving its sheeny pinions before her dazzled eyes, and shedding a rosy halo over the dreary pathway her virgin feet were destined to tread. Of the master passion, it may be said that it resembles the measles; taken late in life, its symptoms are always aggravated. Aunt Effra had "caught" it very late in life, and she had it very bad indeed.

This was alarmingly apparent to her French maid, Felice—a merry, young, bright-eyed attendant, with a laugh that rang out clear as a bell, and a fund of good temper that nothing could subdue. With Aunt Effra's opinions as to the superiority of everything foreign, and the stupidity of everything English, she often declared with a shudder that she would not endure one of her own countrywomen near her.

"A great, gawky thing, with hands as rough as nutmeg-graters, and no more taste than a cow has," she was accustomed to say—"the worst calamity in the way of a maid that could befall a gentlewoman. Ask them to stick in a pin, and they run a skewer into you; trust to their taste, and they'd turn you out a scarecrow; confide in them, and you might as well tell your secret to the town crier. No, no; a French maid for me, with taste and sentiment and feeling, and all that could make a girl a treasure."

Felice was her treasure, as arrant a coquette as ever breathed; but neat, and plump, and dressy, with a compliment ever at her tongue's end, and a cleverness that gave even her faults a fascination.

Young as Felice was, she could boast of considerable experience in love. She—unlike her mistress—had taken it early. She could not count the lovers she had had upon her fingers, they—the lovers—were so numerous. She knew all the symptoms; could, as the doctors say, diagnose the complaint in its every aspect; knew when the attack was slight and likely to be got over, and when it was a bad case, that might with neglect prove fatal. She had never, it is true, seen a deferred attack, like that of Aunt Effra; but her general knowledge helped her in this particular case; and, having tried every other way of accounting for the change in her mistress, she jumped to the conclusion that the "old un" must have become a victim to the tender passion.

"It is very funny," she admitted, with a laugh; "but it must be true."

And this was confirmed by a question abruptly put to her one day, as to whether she did not consider "Marco" a charming name?

Of course she *did* consider it the most charming name she had ever heard. It was romantic! It was delicious! No name in the universe could equal Marco!

Aunt Effra was delighted.

"These French girls," she mentally asserted, "were

so superior! Such taste! Such a superiority of intellect and unmistakable refinement!"

Next night the subject was resumed. It was during the pleasant half-hour which preceded retirement to rest. On such occasions, Mistress Effra Knowles sat in state in her own room, her maidenly form enveloped in a wrapper of rose pink, covered with lace; her dainty feet in little rose velvet slippers, resting on a cushion before the fire, while Felice stood behind her with an ivory-backed brush doing her hair. There was not much of it to "do"—the most substantial portion of the fabric with which she dazzled at dinner parties and bewitched at the opera having been carefully removed to a drawer in which it reposed, with its dressing, like a salad. But she had been accustomed to its being "done," when it was long and thick, in the old, old days, and she persisted in the practice now, when the skimpy wisp was but the mockery of its former self.

During this process the lady was apt to doze, but this night she was wide-awake—restlessly awake.

"And so, Felice," she said, with a simper, "you think Marco a pretty name?"

"Superb! Magnificent, madame!" was the enraptured answer.

"I am glad you think so," resumed the lady, "because—because—in a word, Felice, I am going to take you into my confidence. I may trust you, I am sure?"

"Oh, madame!" cried Felice, pressing the back of the brush and one hand together, as if the very thought of her not being trustworthy would be a source of the keenest agony. "You shall trust me to zee deaths!"

"I know it—I was sure of it," was the prompt answer. "Well, then, you must know that a gentleman of the name of Marco—the name you admire so much—has made—his advances to me; has, in fact, asked me to bestow on him my hand. There! What do you think of that?"

Felice, who had divined something of this before, was in the act of yawning; but hiding her mouth with the ivory back of the brush, she broke into a rapture of delight.

"How fine! How delightful!" she exclaimed; "he must be a noble gentleman! What felicity for madame! What happiness!"

Much more to the same effect fell from the ready lips of the French maid, who was then cautioned that she must not speak of this openly. The gentleman, though of noble birth, and all that was gracious and romantic, had not dared to come forward and avow his attachment, for family reasons. He was an exile; there were prejudices in some minds against exiles, and Marco was painfully alive to that fact. He feared that if Mr. Knowles, her brother, should know of the attachment, he might use his authority and interfere—unwarrantably, of course; still, he might do it, and then what would become of them? It was felt to be better that they should continue to meet in secret, until Marco's affairs were settled, and he could come forward manfully to claim his own, his bride! Meanwhile it was difficult for them to meet without the assistance of a third person in their confidence, and that person they had decided should be Felice!

What joyous, what rapturous words flowed from the lips of Felice at this mark of esteem and confidence! She knew not how to express her gratitude, but went so

far as to kneel at the feet of her mistress, and kiss more than one of the rings that encrusted her taper but attenuated fingers.

Such was the beginning of confidence; and night after night it was renewed, Felice displaying wonderful fortitude in sustaining the weight of reliance thrown upon her, and in keeping up a flow of sympathy, which even suppressed laughter did not cause to bubble over. She had her reward in dresses, trinkets, and other marks of favour, and decidedly enjoyed the love passage which had thus come to break the monotony of everyday life.

Love, however, is not all honey, and even at its sweetest the sting of the bee is sometimes unpleasantly detected. So Aunt Effra found. Not that Marco gave her any cause for uneasiness—after that day when she saw him speaking to the pretty girl, Zerina, at Hyde Park Corner, an incident he had explained away by saying it was his niece; but she was not altogether a fool, nor quite so absolutely eaten up with vanity, but that the question would sometimes present itself, "Does this man really love me?" Mark, she did not see any thing unlikely in his doing so. None of us feel so old or ill-favoured as some of us are. Still, there were occasional doubts and misgivings; and she felt that if these were once set at rest, she should be supremely happy.

This also in time she ventured to confide to Felice, who said within herself, "Ha! ha! The old un's jealous!" but allowed no expression of this sort to escape her lips. On the contrary, she was all sympathy and enthusiasm. It was impossible, she asserted, that the adorable Marco should do other than doat on madame. All who knew her must do so. That was inevitable; and there was no possibility of any exception being made in regard to Marco, who, being a foreigner, must of necessity be a person of unexceptionable taste.

Madame sighed. She was willing to be convinced—she *was* convinced; but still she sighed.

"The men were so fickle," she remarked.

"Because the women, as a rule, were themselves so capricious," Felice suggested.

Madame admitted that there was truth in this; and then, with a good deal of preliminary hesitation, much maidenly blushing, and apologetic asseverations that "no doubt she was very stupid, but so much depended on it in the then state of her heart," she let out that she had conceived the idea of satisfying herself about Marco's truth by applying to a famous sorceress, or possessor of a magic mirror, of whom she had heard, and who lived somewhere at the East-end. To this sorceress she was minded to apply, as a glance at her magic mirror, which had the peculiarity of revealing the form of the beloved one to the eyes of the gazer, would, she admitted, be a source of comfort and consolation to her, if it should happen that what it revealed should accord with her fond anticipations. She therefore entreated Felice to use all her exertions to discover the retreat of the marvellous woman with the mystic mirror.

The French maid undertook the task with alacrity. It was quite in her way. She did not conceal her delight; but there was a merry twinkle in her eye, and a puckering up of the lips, which meant mischief.

That day she went on a secret mission to convey a

missive—a little scented, three-cornered note—to the beloved Marco, who was by this time so far recognized as a favoured suitor that he made periodical visits to spots arranged between them, so that he might either meet the adored Effra, or receive a communication from her in answer to some ardent effusion from his own flattering pen. This mission Felice discharged to her mistress's satisfaction—though it did appear to her that the girl was absent an unconscionable time; but then love is so impatient—and on her return she also brought good news as to the magic mirror.

She had discovered the address of the sorceress, whom she found could be consulted every evening from dusk until midnight at her residence.

That residence was in Wapping.

A Day with the Trout.

IT is not so long since I chronicled in these pages the capture of my largest pike—the gentleman who now lies, with a wonderful wide eye, prone and passive in my hall; looking every bit, though, a twenty-five pounder. That was a lucky day, for the fish were on the feed, and ran famously. It was to try a new rod I went that day—one with all the modern improvements in rings, and brazing, and the rest—and well it did its duty. That rod rests snugly in its stout jean bag, waiting to be taken out; but it will have to wait a little longer, for this has not been the weather for hard work with a heavy jack rod, especially when Jarman writes one such letters as this:—

“BRANSMEAD, Toosdy.

“HOND. SIR—You said as lass time you were 'ere yud lik' me to sen' y'u wurd when the ma fli was out, so i rite sir too say as i see 'em out buteful lass nite, an' if you com' now i can fine you some good sport as is.—i am yures to commarn,

“J. JARMAN.”

I cannot reproduce J. Jarman's handwriting, but I can his appearance, as he stood waiting for me at Poker-lane Station the other evening.

Fancy a stoutly built, hearty-looking brown and red man, with a great deal of black whiskers, and a blue upper lip, all over tiny dots; bright, keen grey eyes, with a good deal of black about them; and a pleasant smile, which showed a set of such white teeth that I once asked J. Jarman what he cleaned them with.

“Clean 'em wi', sir?” he said, laughing; “why, under the pump, with my finger.”

I never tried the plan, but if the practice produces such teeth as J. Jarman's, I should recommend it to all beaux, and belles too, who would not object to the pump.

J. Jarman was standing in his dark, olive-green velveteen jacket and leather leggings, a gun under his arm, and a one-eyed retriever by his side, just as if it were shooting time; and he gave me a broad grin of welcome as I alighted.

“Come preepared, sir, I see,” he said, after the first greeting, and when I had made a rush to rescue a very lean-looking elongated grey bag from the one porter's hands.

I say the one porter. But I beg his pardon: he is station master, ticket clerk and collector, and telegraphist at Poker Lane, for a very small salary, or, as he calls it, “screw.”

“Yes, Joe, I've come prepared. This is the new fly-rod.”

“You are a wunner for noo rods, sir,” said Joe, admiringly.

And then we walked on down the lane and over the wooden bridge, where pedestrians went over dryshod, while quadrupeds drew wheeled vehicles through the ford.

How delightfully the brook babbled to my London ears, and how brightly it danced over the pebbles! But pleasantest sight of all was the sight of the flies dancing over the river, and rings being formed every now and again as some trout gorged a luckless trifier over the swiftly running stream.

“The trout are feeding, Joe,” I said.

“Oh, yes, sir. Them little uns is allus a feeding. But the big uns in the park's pretty well on.”

Good news this, and I cuddled my new rod a little more tightly, as I wondered whether it was to bring me as good luck as its predecessor.

For this was a new venture, one of Mr. Alfred Young's guinea fly-rods, obtained at 174, Oxford-street, under the sign of the Golden Perch. I have an affection for the Golden Perch, for it is to me associated with all the pleasant fishing days of my life. Did I not know it when honest John Cheek sold you fishing tackle with one hand, and patted you with the other, as he made jokes, such as he sent to *Punch*? Was it not from here that my first rod came, my very first, a long way back—there, I won't say how many years ago—the rod as to which I have never since had such another? It came to me as a present during a childish illness, and I'll describe it. It was a three-jointed hazel, with black whalebone top, ferules of a brownish red, and bent like a whip. With it came a beautiful line, with a blue cork float with a white top, and a hook of the finest of steel; and also therewith was a little black book with a golden perch on the cover, and within its sacred piscatorial pages descriptions and cuts of freshwater fish, and advice when and where to catch them—item, where to get your tackle, with size and price at the Golden Perch.

Did I not know that Golden Perch afterwards, and get my tackle there in the days of Armstrong; so was it wonderful that I should be trying, in more mature days, one of his fly-rods?

But to my trouting. I found snug quarters at the inn just outside Sir Bridgeman Butt's park gate, even as I do annually; for Sir Bridgeman Butt gives me a day whenever I ask. Goodly owner as he is in having that charming little trout river running so cleverly through his estate, which, though only a mile across, the river contrives to wind about, and covers three before it leaves it.

Joe partook of a “moog” of ale—Joe always has “moogs” of whatever he drinks—and after his promise to call me at daybreak, I sought my couch early, and he returned to his keeper's lodge.

Joe kept his word, and called me at daybreak, just as a beautiful pearly-grey was stealing through my lead lattice; and, on looking at my watch, I found it was half-past two.

“Rather early,” I said, sleepily, as I thrust my head into the basin. “Never mind, six hours' good fishing before breakfast.”

People laugh at the fishermen, and humorous jokes

are made at their expense, about catching colds and the like; but if they only knew the pleasures of the walk by the stream at early morn, when the birds are awakening, and the first singers of the joyous chorus are beginning to tune their pipes, they would laugh no more, but indulge in the sincerest form of flattery—imitation.

We were soon by the river-side, and, in the cool grey of the delicious morning, I fitted together my rod, taking one of the two tops out of the conveniently hollowed landing handle. Then a few whips of silk, passed backwards and forwards over the wire loops at each joint, made all secure; and then came the task of making the little brass winch whizz, as the line was drawn out and passed through the rings; and then the gut bottom, with its point fly and dropper, nicely prepared over night, was attached—capital imitations of the grey and green drakes, being the flies I used; and at last, with the dew heavy on the grass, a faint mist wreathing over the water, and the May-flies just beginning their dance, I tried my first cast.

Capital! The rod was all it should be—lithe, beautifully tapering, and giving vitality to the line, as it played right from the wrist, sending the two flies across the stream, so that they fell lightly on the water just beneath the farther bank.

"The pynte fly first, sir, and then the dropper," said Joe, sententiously; "our trout's as cunning as all that. Better, sir, ever so much—a deal better, sir," at every cast. "I'll say that's a good rod."

He was right, it was a good rod; and every cast made me more satisfied with it, for I could throw with precision under the bushes that fringed the stream, beneath the alders, close up to the willow pollards; and all without getting hung up.

But how would my new friend behave in a struggle with a fish?

"Jest try under that alder, sir," said Joe, in a whisper. "Keep well back from the stream, sir. That's him!"

There was a streak through the water as my fly dropped down beneath the alder boughs, a turn of the wrist at the same moment, and I had the fellow fast—a nice pound trout, which began by leaping right out of the stream, and then playing vigorously about, till he was wound gently in, and scooped out by Joe, the rod having well played its part in tiring out the fish, and altogether making me feel satisfied that there was a great deal in putting together four pieces of hickory and lancewood in a way that should be perfect as a fly-rod.

I need scarcely say how, with the May-flies performing their pleasant dance above that stream, I worked gently along it, with my creel getting slowly heavier as I added fish after fish. For the trout were not furiously on the feed, but required tempting and coaxing by many guileful ways. So long as the banks of the river were dim and misty, and the sun was low, they were to be taken; but as the glorious morning advanced, and the sun's rays illumined the depths and shallows, the hour seemed to be too late for breakfast; and hide as I would, cast my flies as carefully as I might, no rise followed.

"You wunt ketch no more now, sir," said Joe, grinning. "It's about all over till evening."

"Then I'll have some breakfast myself, Joe," I replied. "But wait a moment; let me try under that stump."

It was a long throw to where an old willow stump lay over the stream, forming with the bank a dark hollow, which I felt sure must own its trout.

It took three or four tries, and the dragging out of more line from my winch, before I managed to deliver the flies perfectly straight, point first, just above that dark patch of water, towards which the stream took it gently.

There was a rush and a swirl, and a big trout nearly doubled my rod, which played it almost automatically for ten minutes, before, after a series of frantic rushes, it came gently on its side, literally into Joe's landing-net; and on then examining my creel, I had seven brace—the largest, this last one, nearly two pounds in weight.

I need not dilate on the charms of that pleasant breakfast at the fishing inn, nor the delicious dawdle amongst the old trees of the park and down by the river, as during the day I had a good wander, and picked out the best places for the evening's whipping.

Then there was the dinner—such a dinner! so simple and yet so delicious! Ah, if one could only eat one's London dinners with that piquant country appetite, which makes every mouthful a very joy, and asks for neither Yorkshire Relish nor Worcester Sauce!

But, there, I am no gourmet; so let me discourse again of my fishing.

Joe came to me again in the evening, finishing his bread and butter and radishes as he entered the room. He had been busy all day over the "young fezzans, as was growing wonderful," and now was at my service to show me some good places on the river.

Alas! for the precariousness of the fisherman's pursuit. I whipped the stream, and that new rod made the flies fall in the most natural way possible, but I neither got nor saw a single rise the whole evening. The May-flies, too, had disappeared, and, save where it rippled over shallows, the surface of the river was like so much glass.

"They'll come on better as it gets later, sir," Joe kept on asserting; but Joe proved to be a false prophet, for they—the trout—did not come on better; and at last, when it was dark, I had to unsplunge, pack up, and go back to my inn, with my creel perfectly empty.

Moral, then, good brother-angler—up with the lark in the morning—before him, if you can, for it was then that I was rewarded with my seven brace of trout, which I laid artistically in my creel, with plenty of bright green fern leaves, and, catching the last up-train, bore proudly home.

IT is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is also easy in solitude to live after your own; but great is he who, in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

DISTRIBUTION OF LETTERS, &c.—A curious statistical table has been drawn up in France, showing the distribution of letters and telegrams per head in different countries. Switzerland is first in both classes, the telegrams averaging eight for every 100 inhabitants; in France there are 23 letters for every 100 inhabitants; in England, 20 1-12th; and in the United States, 19. In England there are 54 telegrams for every 100 inhabitants; in Holland, 51; in Belgium, 47; in the United States, 32; in Germany, 31. France ranks tenth, and Russia last, with one.

A Lay of the Mews.

HE.

UP, lazy Tib! claws were not made to sit on;
The shining stars invite us to exertion:
Mount to the roof, and, hunting like a Briton,
Show you're an English cat, and not a Persian.

SHE.

Rest, and be thankful for the chance of resting.
Rest, and throw hunting to the dogs, I'll none of it:
Hunting, no doubt, assists you in digesting,
But when you don't require it, where's the fun of it?

HE.

Fun? It's all fun, my philosophic friend.
Lives there a cat so dull as not to praise it?
It sets each nerve a-tingling to the end,
Gives one an appetite, and then—allays it.

SHE.

If you would not object to my inquiring—
For it's a point on which I would not quarrel—
How can you justify a sport so tiring,
And one, as Freeman tells us, so immoral?

HE.

Freeman be hanged! Learn from De Quincey's pen,
That murder is an art worth cultivating.
He's right! I've no such ecstasy as when
My victim lies before me, palpitating.

SHE.

Old Sydney Smith said that ideal bliss
Was *foie-gras*, eaten to the sound of trumpets:
A strange ideal, truly! Mine is this—
Cream, slightly warmed, and served with buttered
crumpets.

HE.

Give me a juicy sparrow to dismember—
None of your crumpets, a dyspeptic diet!—
Caught at a bound, at midnight in December,
After a stealthy agony of quiet.

SHE.

Ah! but they're cold, these nightly promenades—
One's blood gets curdled, and one's nose frost-bitten.
Far wiser to give up such escapades,
Purr by the fire, and educate the kitten.

HE.

My son? I'll undertake his education
In calisthenics, and all kinds of slaughter.
You, if you like a lazy occupation,
May sit and play cat's-cradle with your daughter.

SHE.

Oh! that's the way you'd educate a child,
Enthusiastic father, if I'd let you?
But if you want to make my Tommies wild,
I'll only keep hen-kittens, and upset you.

HE.

Tib, you alarm me! Shall these vain disputes
Restrict my offspring to the female gender?
Far rather would I dress like Puss in Boots,
And let myself be tethered to the fender.

SHE.

Desponding parent, you shall have your way;
And now I'll settle what we both must do—
If you luxuriate with me by day,
I'll hunt like Nimrod all the night with you.

Hand-Wings.

VERY few of the visitors to the Zoological Gardens ever think to lift up the little curtain that hangs in front of two or three cages placed in inconspicuous places. When, however, these little curtains are lifted, the visitor will see hanging from pieces of wood what appear to be roughly made bag purses, of a very shiny, delicate, corrugated black skin. The next moment he sees a little rat-shaped head, with a pair of black, beady, inquisitive eyes gazing at him, and then he awakes to the fact that he is gazing at so many bats hanging upside down, probably by one claw, which looks like the string of the bag. In other cases they suspend themselves by the little hook on the apex or shoulder of the wing, as it seems to be to the casual observer, but which is in reality the animal's thumb.

You see these curious specimens there of Indian, American, and Java bats, two or three in a cage, and you think what monsters they are as compared with the bats which flit through the country lanes on summer evenings, so silent in their flight as they emit that peculiar whizzing cry, so shrill, and yet so faint, that hundreds of observers never notice it at all. But what would you say to seeing huge bats, some of which spread their wings over a space of five, even six feet, hanging clustered in their hundreds and thousands?

In Java these creatures sally out of an evening in countless thousands to visit the plantations, and feed upon the fruit. In Bengal they affect the banyan trees, those enormous objects of the vegetable kingdom, each of which, with its many pendant suckers, forms a grove of itself. Here the bats are often seen in enormous numbers, blackening the very branches.

Mr. Waterton, the naturalist, gives some very interesting descriptions of these wing-handed creatures, dwelling especially upon that bat of evil reputation, the vampire. For who has not read or heard the legends of this very objectionable visitor, who is said to fly in at open windows, and make a nocturnal meal of the life-blood of the first victim it encounters?

For a long time this was considered to be a myth as fabulous as the German legends, but Mr. Waterton lends his testimony to the fact. While travelling on the river Demerara, he took possession of a ruined house, made it temporarily habitable by patching, and driving out the frogs and snakes, and then goes on to say how thoroughly he observed the habits of these creatures. Further he says:—

"I went to the river Paumaron with a Scotch gentleman. We hung our hammocks in the thatched loft of a planter's house. Next morning I heard this gentleman muttering in his hammock.

"What is the matter, sir?" said I, softly. 'Is anything amiss?'

"What's the matter?" answered he, surlily. 'Why, the vampires have been sucking me to death.'

"As soon as there was light enough, I went to his hammock, and saw it much stained with blood.

"There," said he, thrusting his foot out of the hammock, 'see how these infernal imps have been drawing my life's-blood.'

"On examining his foot, I found the vampire had tapped his great toe. There was a wound somewhat less than that made by a leech: the blood was still oozing from it. I conjectured he might have lost from



"HANGING ASLEEP IN THOUSANDS."—(Page 236.)

ten to twelve ounces of blood. Whilst examining it, I think I put him into a worse humour by remarking that an European surgeon would not have been so generous as to have blooded him without making a charge. He looked up in my face, but did not say a word. I saw he was of opinion that I had better have spared this piece of ill-timed levity.

"I had often wished to have been once sucked by the vampire, in order that I might have it in my power to say that it had really happened to me. There can be no pain in the operation, for the patient is always asleep when the vampire is sucking him; and as for the loss of a few ounces of blood, that would be a trifle in the long run. Many a night have I slept with my foot out of the hammock, to tempt this winged surgeon, expecting he would be there, but it was all in vain; the vampire never sucked me, and I could never account for his not doing so, for we were inhabitants of the same loft for months together. D'Azara, who is a faithful describer, observes: 'The wounds which they inflicted, without my feeling them at the time, were circular, or rather elliptical; their diameter is trifling, and their depth so superficial as scarcely to penetrate the cutis. The blood drawn is merely from the capillary vessels of the skin, and is extracted then, beyond doubt, by the action of sucking or licking. Nobody fears these animals, or gives himself any trouble about them.'" Mr. Darwin says: "Stories are told of incautious sufferers having bled so profusely as to have died."

For my part, I never had the pleasure of awaking to find a vampire bat settled on my toe; but when on the coast of Africa, as a young man in one of her Majesty's ships, we used, whenever we could get leave, to go ashore and set fear at defiance, to have our adventures with various animals. The great thing that struck me, though, in the moist African jungle of that part of the world was the absence of animal life, and, save for the hum of insects, the solemn stillness of the woods.

Here I have often encountered the bats; and, with the regular sporting element of the Anglo-Saxon, in that peculiarity so finely satirised by the French author, who, alluding to our habits, says, "What a fine morning! Let us go out and kill something," I am afraid that I and my companions often did go out expressly to kill something.

I remember on one occasion, at Whydah, for want of nobler game, I went out bat shooting. A couple of gentlemen, as black as ebony, undertook to find me a good tree; and starting one morning before the sun was up, they led me through the woods to a clearing, where a half-deserted village of some half-dozen or so thatched dwellings stood; close by were a cluster of palms, and near them a perfect forest giant, whose branches were nearly bare of leaves. It was of the fig tribe, I think; and on my first approach it seemed to me as if it were loaded with very large fruit.

On coming nearer, however, the fruit resolved itself into bats, hanging asleep in thousands; and, as a matter of course, I began to load and fire, bringing down half-a-dozen at every discharge, while hundreds, alarmed by the noise, the crashing of the shot through the branches, and the falling bodies of their fellows, began to take flight and circle about the tree, half bewildered by the light of the sun.

I was soon weary of the slaughter; and but for the assurance of the blacks that I was doing good—for the

bats were horribly mischievous, and destroyed fruit and crop—I should not have continued the slaughter after the first fire; for these bats were nasty-looking little wretches, of no earthly use, and their blackbeetly odour was anything but pleasant. Their flight was the thing which most attracted me: it was easy and effortless, and always seemed to me to be dependent upon some peculiar force of will more than the beating of the wings.

Queer Cards.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE BITTER END.

"A MAN on the brink of death thinks very little about money. I scarcely gave the loss more than a moment's thought, and then—some fresh impulse moving me—went away; away to some yet lower haunt, some fouler sink, than this old Haymarket itself.

"Ten minutes' walk brought me to one of the purlieus of Leicester-square.

"In a close and heated room, to the sorry music of a cracked piano and a fiddle out of tune, danced as wretched a crew as I had ever dreamt of in my wildest dreams. Why, the very Haymarket was pure compared to this! Women, with all that was once womanly crushed and worn out of them; men, on whose countenance every vice had set its stamp—these filled the wretched room, and joined in the riotous dance. And suddenly one of the women, the forlornest of them all, I thought, for she was the youngest, began to sing.

"It was one of Lucy's songs.

"A trifle like this affected me more than a serious loss had done. I was unmanned in a moment; and leaning my head on the back of a chair, I wept bitterly, but with no relief.

"Hot, hot, and scorching were those tears; but they assuaged no pain, they rather increased it.

"The forlorn girl had finished her song. With some touch of human feeling, she came up to me and spoke kindly. A bearded foreigner thrust himself between us, and led her away. He spoke to her roughly and harshly, and she—her momentary mood of goodness and tenderness over—answered him with a coarse oath.

"Then I knew to what a degradation would Lucy fall—a degradation so deep, that her endeavours to rise from it would be, like this poor girl's, the mere efforts of a moment.

"Then I knew that my own degradation would be as deep, my efforts at self-redemption as feeble. Then I knew that it was best for me to die at once.

"But a deadly sickness was upon me, so that I feared my own weakness would prevent me from committing suicide.

"I took out some coins which were in my trousers pockets. I had some food. I had some drink. I felt, now, strong enough and resolute enough to die.

"There was one old college friend, whom of all others I should most have liked to see, and to bid farewell; but he was in a quiet, country vicarage far away. My own family need never know of my fate. And for Lucy—yet a few months, perchance a few years, and my fate would be her own.

"So I left this dreary place, where even the servants began to look sleepy and worn out—where women, stupefied with drink, were lying along the benches that

lined the room; whilst others, whom the drink had not stupefied, but maddened, tore round the room in wild dances, to the music of their own shrill voices, for the fiddler and the pianist had ceased to play.

"I left it, and walked into the streets again.

"How calm I felt! The solemn secrets of death were so near that the fever and the fret of life seemed paltry.

"There was a deep serenity—I will say it, a deep serenity—in my mind and heart, as I walked southwards to reach the river.

"There were few people about, and I met with scarcely any interruption, until, in a bye-street near the Strand, a half-drunken sailor ran against me.

"I pushed him aside, and went on.

"The fellow followed me with some clumsy words of rough apology. I wanted no conversation with him, but I just turned round to answer him.

"I stood just by a lamp-post.

"The half-drunken sailor became suddenly sober.

"The half-drunken sailor was Lucy's brother!

"He knew me, and he saw that I knew him. There was no need for explanation.

"You scoundrel!" he cried—"where is she? Nice news I got when I got home, and a kind friend you've been to us all, you black villain! Where is she—where is she? Tell me, or I'll tear the secret out of you!"

"He was close to me. I could scarcely speak. He struck me.

"The blow roused in me at once all the instincts of a gentleman. I knocked him down.

"He rose readily, put back his long black hair from his forehead, and, with a vicious look in his dark eyes, dashed at me again. He was far, far stronger than I; but he fought in a rough, clumsy, violent sailor way, and had simply no chance with me now that I was on my guard and aroused.

"What great right, after all, had he to speak thus? The right of a brother—pah! A brother, whose drunkenness and brutality had rendered her home so wretched.

"Forgetting my own crimes, indignation against his filled me; and I fought as well as I had ever boxed in my life. It was a silent fight, and in a lonely street. Rage had made him sober enough now.

"Frequently knocked down, and beginning to show the effects of the punishment he had suffered, I saw his eyes flash with a yet more wicked and evil look than they had worn when he first burst out in denunciation of me.

"Between his teeth, and with a very grim emphasis, he said—

"One way or the other I'll have your life, my gentleman."

"One more wild, fierce rush he made. I parried his blows, and hit him heavily on the ear as he slipped aside.

"The blow would have stunned a weaker man—it staggered even him, strong as he was; but he was soon upon me again.

"And just as we closed, his right arm went swiftly down from its guard; swiftly drew forth a knife; swiftly, ere I could leap back, the steel was in me.

"As I fell, I heard him repeat—

"One way or another, I said. 'I've done it now!'"

"Days and nights had passed away before I became conscious. I awoke in a hospital bed; and learnt, as I grew stronger, that I had been brought there by the police; that my wound had been a very dangerous one indeed; and that, just as I began to recover from its effects, *delirium tremens* had set in.

"My recovery, the doctors told me, was marvellous indeed.

"I asked if the man who had stabbed me had been arrested; and gave a deep breath of relief when I learnt that he had not. At least, there was now no need for the full truth to be known.

"I said he was a drunken sailor—which was true; I did not say how deep and terrible were his motives for the act.

"Some weeks yet elapsed before I was strong enough to leave the hospital. At times I seemed again on the point of death; and my evidence was taken in the hospital itself.

"When I came out, there was an appearance to be made at a police-court. I gave a false name—what mattered an extra lie?—and went away.

"I was alone; I was penniless—or nearly so. There were some ten or fifteen pounds still to my credit at my bankers', but I could not go for it without running the risk of my secret being known.

"How to live was now the question.

"I thought no longer of suicide; and I had one motive, at least, in living—to see Lucy again; to warn her that her brother had returned, and how desperate he was, and to put her on her guard against his fury.

"I met an old friend who, like myself, had fallen low, and who now got his living as a singer at an obscure music hall.

"Laugh if you like, my esteemed fellow-tramps: he persuaded me to get my living as a comic singer! Laugh still more loudly, if you choose, when I tell you that I succeeded.

"As a general rule, I wrote my own songs. I was just in that grim and despairing mood when a man feels an absolute need for buffoonery; my voice, though not so good as it had been in my better years, was at least equal to the wants of the place; and thus I became a 'recognized attraction' in the 'comic line.'

"I became a 'recognized attraction' in the 'comic line.' Yes; and, oh! the bitter night walks through London—the remorse, the despair! I was too far gone. I had fallen too deeply to think of returning to my own proper sphere of life. I loathed the trade by which I got my bread; and yet, whilst loathing it, liked it too. I liked to hear the dull mob applaud—liked their laughter—liked their cheers; grew funnier and wilder as they shouted out their paltry encouragements; and then left the place at midnight to walk about the streets—devouring my own heart.

"Often, in these lonely wanderings, I heard a wild laugh which I thought was Lucy's. Often, in these sad night rambles, I saw a light, hurrying form which I thought was Lucy's. Often I followed—always in vain.

"But the craving to see her grew stronger and stronger. Shall I tell you the whole truth? I loved the girl still!

"I had few companions, and no friends. The only man with whom I became really intimate was a young surgeon, whose outlook in life was, alike through his

want of friends and through his own misconduct, almost as dreary and desolate as my own.

"Sharing his rounds, I saw the whole night-life of London under its most rueful aspect—saw it with its rouge washed away—saw it with its false laughter hushed by sickness and pain.

"One night—it was the night of a 'great success' of mine (I had made a few hundred fools laugh a little more loudly than was their wont)—he met me as I left the hall, and took me with him to see a fresh patient.

"Into a wretched court, near Drury-lane, he led me. The night—it was November—was drizzly and cold. The court was nearly ankle-deep in mud.

"As we entered one of its most wretched houses, a girl met us.

"Well, Polly, any better yet upstairs?" said my friend, in a voice which he tried to render cheery and encouraging.

"Better, sir? No, nor never won't be. She's been taking on awful to-day, has poor Rose. She got out of bed, screaming. It was all as me and Mrs. Wilson could do to keep her from doing herself a mischief. And then the cough took her again, sir—nigh choked her, it did. Then she laid down, and got to sleep again, and is a-sleeping now. But, oh! sir, the Lord only knows what we can do to help her. I've pawned my own clothes off my back to keep her, and no praise neither, for she done as much for me before now; and the rent's not to be got, though Mrs. Wilson—which I will say it for her—hasn't pressed us much. She knows what it is herself, she do!"

"Thus volubly ran on a girl. Yes, a girl! She was not nineteen. She had the worn eyes, she had the wrinkled brow, of an old woman. Her garments were scanty, but with some trace of flimsy tawdriness about them still that it was inexpressibly painful to see.

"Shading the candle with her hand, she led us upstairs.

"I knew what I was about to see. I knew that the meeting, sought for so long, was come.

"We got to the top storey of the wretched, creaky stairs. There, in a room horribly bare of furniture, literally with nothing in it save the bed—say, rather, the wretched pallet—on which the dying woman lay, there was my village rose.

"We trod lightly and softly; the only sound we made was that of the poor girl's weeping.

"Lucy still slept. A hectic flush was on her cheek; her breathing was hard and unnatural.

"I stood aside, lest the sudden sight of me should terrify or shock her.

"No such caution was needed; for, when she woke, it was plain, from her vacant stare, that death, which was coming swiftly upon her, had already turned her brain. She recognized not one of us, but talked loudly, swiftly, and almost screamingly.

"She named my name, she named it! Oh, wonderful and awful mystery of a woman's heart! she named it, not with reproaches, but with wild and passionate love. Not a word did she say of our quarrel; her talk was either of our first meeting or of her later life.

"It needed no wild confessions, no frantic revelations, to tell what that life had been; nor could I grieve that it was coming to an end. But there was a dumb agony in my heart, tugging and striving there; and my

eyes, from which no tears could flow, burnt into my very brain.

"Then came a fearful cough, again and again renewed; it seemed almost to tear her very life out.

"The poor girl who had been so true to her was sobbing loudly and bitterly. Even my friend—a cynical man by nature, and accustomed to such scenes—even my friend was moved. For myself, I had but one selfish wish—that she might speak to me again before she died.

"It is coming to a close," said the surgeon, as, after another outburst of coughing, Lucy sank back on the bed. "Hold her head up a little."

"What a meeting! How I had played with those curls long ago! I raised her slightly, as he told me.

"As a feeble smile played over her face, she began to talk rapidly and vaguely of the old Devonshire village, and of her childhood there.

"Always so," said the surgeon—"always go back to their childhood just before their death. Forget what happened to them yesterday—remember what happened to them years ago. Here, let me assist her instead of you. My hand is steadier. Stand aside a little."

"She grew visibly feebler, but calmer too; and at last, at last, after long staring at my face, she knew me! Her lean arms—she flung them passionately forth with the strength of the death agony towards me. Her hot lips, they met mine, they were pressed to mine; and the hot lips became colder, colder; the lean arms relaxed their grasp; breathing my name still, breathing it with ineffable love and tenderness still, her voice grew feebler, until it was utterly hushed in the silence of death.

"Then, with a cry of extreme misery, I flung myself upon her bed, and pressed her in my arms as though the passion of my love could bring back life once more; and the tears, so long delayed, came at last, and came in floods.

"The poor girl also wept bitterly.

"Come away," said my friend. "This is no place for you now."

"It is!" I cried. "It is the one place for me on earth. I tell you, I loved her; I tell you, I wronged her. I brought her to this end; I—I—I!"

"Said the girl—

"Then you done a shameful thing, sir. It aint for the likes of me to preach; but if that there corpse aint a sermon, there never was. And so good, too! So good to little children, and to poor girls as had no other friend—no, not one, not one, in this wide town. God forgive you sir, and all of us."

"To provide for her funeral—these things do happen, and they rather startle quiet folks at their fireside—to provide for her funeral, I had to write a new comic song, and to sing it.

"I did!

"What matters the rest of my story? I sank lower and lower yet. My old sin of drink got to be worse than ever. I lost one engagement after another through it, until my voice itself failed me.

"And for my future?

"My old college friend lives twenty miles from here. I am past shame. I go to borrow money from him, if I can, to ask him to pay my passage to Australia; that, at least, if I can do nothing else, I may place some thousands of miles between me and the reeking city graveyard where my Lucy lies."

A Kafir Court of Justice.

I HAVE just had an opportunity of attending a Kafir *lit de justice*, and I can only say that if we civilized people managed our legal difficulties in the same way it would be an uncommonly good thing for everybody except the lawyers.

Cows are at the bottom of nearly all the native disputes, and the Kafirs always take their grievance soberly to the nearest magistrate, who arbitrates to the best of his ability between the disputants. They are generally satisfied with his award; but if the case is an intricate one, or they consider that the question is not really solved, then they have the right of appeal, and it is this court of appeal which I have been attending lately.

It is held in the newly-built office of the minister of native affairs—the prettiest and most respectable-looking public office which I have seen in Maritzburg, by the way. Before the erection of this modest but comfortable building, the court used to be held out in the open air, under the shade of some large trees—a more picturesque method of doing business, certainly, but subject to inconveniences on account of the weather. It is altogether the most primitive and patriarchal style of business one ever saw, but all the more delightful on that account.

It is inexpressibly touching to see with one's own eyes the wonderfully deep personal devotion and affection of the Kafirs for the kindly English gentleman who for thirty years and more has been their real ruler and their wise and judicious friend. Not a friend to pamper their vices and give way to their great fault of idleness, but a true friend to protect their interests, and yet to labour incessantly for their social advancement, and for their admission into the great field of civilized workers.

The Kafirs know little and care less for all the imposing and elaborate machinery of British rule; the Queen on her throne is but a fair and distant dream—woman to them; Sir Garnet himself, that great *inkosi*, was as nobody in their eyes compared to their own chieftain, their king of hearts, the one white man to whom of their own free will and accord they give the royal salute whenever they see him. I have stood in magnificent halls and seen king and kaiser pass through crowds of bowing courtiers, but I never saw anything which impressed me so strongly as the simultaneous springing to the feet, the loud shout of “Bayete!” given with the right hand upraised (a higher form of salutation than “*Inkosi!*” and only accorded to Kafir royalty), the look of love and rapture and satisfied expectation in all those keen black faces, as the minister, quite unattended, without pomp or circumstance of any sort or kind, quietly walked into the large room and sat himself down at his desk with some papers before him.

There was no clerk, no official of any sort: no one stood between the people and the fountain of justice. The extraordinary simplicity of the trial which commenced was only to be equalled by the decorum and dignity with which it was conducted.

First of all, everybody sat down upon the floor, the plaintiff and defendant amicably side by side opposite to the minister's desk, and the other natives, about a hundred in number, squatted in various groups. Then,

as there was evidently a slight feeling of surprise at my sitting myself down in the only other chair—they probably considered me a new-fashioned clerk—the minister explained that I was the wife of another *inkosi*, and that I wanted to see and hear how Kafirmen stated their case when anything went wrong with their affairs.

This explanation was perfectly satisfactory to all parties, and they regarded me no more, but immediately set to work on the subject in hand.

A sort of *précis* of each case had been previously prepared from the magistrate's report for Mr. S—'s information by his clerk, and these documents greatly helped me to understand what was going on. No language can be more beautiful to listen to than either the Kafir or Zulu tongue. It is soft and liquid as Italian, with just the same gentle accentuation on the penultimate and antepenultimate syllables. The clicks which are made with the tongue every now and then, and are part of the language, give it a very quaint sound, and the proper names are excessively harmonious.

The Note-book.

BEWARE of beggars with babies. An employer of labour, possessing much of the milk of human kindness, was asked by one of his hands—a female with a child in her arms—for the loan of half a sovereign. As she was already indebted to him in a like sum, he objected to accede to her request, even though it was “to enable her to pay her club.” She, however, was persistent, and the baby began to whimper. It would be uncharitable to assume that the whimpering of the infant was the result of a pinch or the prick of a pin; but, suffice it to say, it did whimper most opportunely, and attracted the attention of our friend, who gave it a pitying look, fumbled in his pocket, and then handed over some money to the applicant. On being slightly rallied on his good-nature, he remarked, “I looked at the little child, and couldn't refuse.” “Well, but,” chimed in his clerk, “it wasn't her baby, and she hasn't got one!”

In looking over the Army List, it is curious to find that the Browns, Joneses, and Robinsons of society do not shine so conspicuously as might be expected. The Smiths hold their own very well, and are indeed the most numerous class; but they are run very hard by the Campbells, who take up a whole column and a-half. After the Campbells come other Scotch names—the Gordons, the Stewarts, and the Hamiltons supplying more of our officers than any other families. It is only in rear of these clans that the Browns make their appearance, in company with a score of other families equally numerous. There are, it appears, as many as 22,000 officers in the army and militia who are entitled to have their names in the Army List, and as Lord Elcho assures us we could not bring more than 35,000 fighting soldiers into the field at any moment, it follows that we have nearly one officer to command every efficient soldier.

Our readers may not know how the attempt to reach the North Pole was contemplated by Captain Nares.

Of the two ships, the *Alert* and the *Discovery*, the former was to be pushed north as far as possible, and the latter was to remain behind as a *dépôt* and as a means of getting back, supposing the *Alert* was frozen in and had to be abandoned. The crew of the *Alert* would be divided into sledging parties; for it is estimated that the last three or four hundred miles north would have to be traversed on foot, and these sledging parties were to start together, each conveyance loaded with stores. If there are eight sledges, the whole distance to the North Pole will be divided into eight portions, and when the first eighth of the distance has been accomplished, one of the sledges will return, handing over its spare stores to the other seven. At the end of another eighth, a second sledge will return, leaving its spare stores in the hands of the six remaining parties. So they will go on till it comes to the last party to reach the North Pole alone, and this party, it is conjectured, will be under the charge of Commander Markham, R.N., who has already much experience of Arctic travelling. As he and his party returns they will find *dépôts* of stores on the road, to help them back to the *Alert*.

The *Pandora*, which has sailed from Portsmouth, goes to the Arctic seas to get some news of the Polar expedition, to try to reach the North Pole. The *Pandora*, if it cannot find our ships, will deposit the letters and packets in a cairn on an island known to Captain Nares, the commander of the expedition, in the hope that they will be fetched away some time during the autumn; for it is by no means improbable that the expedition will have to remain a second winter in the Arctic seas. After the *Pandora* has done its best to seek the expedition and obtain news of the crews, it will proceed with the second object of its voyage, which is no other than to make another attempt at solving the great problem of the north-west passage. Captain Allen Young means once more to try to push his ship through Peel Straits, or Bellot's Straits and Franklin Channel, and so get into Behring's Straits. Last year he found a pack of ice of but thirty or forty miles broad to stop him, and if the summer should be a mild one this year, there seems a good prospect of his being the first to accomplish this long-dreamt-of scheme.

During the last trial of the 38-ton gun, the artillerymen were a good deal hindered by vessels crossing the line of fire. Certainly her Majesty's School of Gunnery has no right to interrupt the free navigation of British waters; and it being nearly high tide, a number of billyboys, with most irritating persistency, crossed the line of fire from time to time during the first series of the shots at the targets, which were moored—with banners on either hand—at 1,000, 1,500, and 2,000 yards out on the Maplin Sands. The rounds were to have been fired alternately at these three ranges; but, owing to the frequent interruptions, shots were in the first two series taken as they could be got, and it was amusing to observe the nonchalance with which the barges stood on, with a heavy shot now raising an eruption of foam a quarter of a mile ahead of them, and anon its twin brother ricocheting away for miles right across their wake. They never altered their course in the slightest, and they appeared to manifest a sublime confidence that they would not be hit, which would indi-

cate that this was not their first acquaintance with the fire of Shoeburyness gunners. The following conversation is said to have occurred between two billyboys on the occasion in question:—

"Bill, hadn't we best ease her off to leeward a bit?"

"What for?"

"Them shots."

"Yah! Just let the swaddies hit us, that's all. They'd best not!"

To use the quaint old saying, we have been, in the article "Jumbo," "holloaing before we were out of the wood," for here is the latest news:—"Since the withdrawal of her Majesty's ship *Ariel* from Whydah, the King of Dahomey again refuses to pay the fine of 500 puncheons of palm oil imposed on him by Commodore Hewett, and has ordered the Caboceers to return the oil which they had already seized for effecting the payment."

If the King persists, why not send out a brigade to bring him to his senses?—say Captain Shaw and his firemen, who might, as Artemus Ward called it, "squirt," till the sable potentate came to.

Are we to have a new fashionable style of suicide, to be called Sultanism or Portecide? It seems like it; for here is a weak-minded creature who has evidently read the report of the Sultan's death. The case happened at Liverpool, where a commission agent was charged with attempting to commit suicide by cutting the veins of his left arm. When asked if he had tried to commit suicide, he replied, "That's about it." He added that he was in embarrassed circumstances, and depressed on account of separation from his wife. The embarrassed circumstances are awkward, the separation from the wife might be an advantage—*might* be, of course—but commission agents should not play the fool with scissors. Fate will use hers quite soon enough.

It is to be hoped that the sinful writer in the *World* will not squib Mr. Lewis any more. Listen to what came out in evidence:—"In the article 'Under the Clock' Mr. Lewis was contemptuously spoken of as 'the White Waistcoat,' and on one of the weekly placards of the paper, which was circulated all over the country, the words 'the Revenge of the White Waistcoat' appeared on it in large and striking characters." Shocking! awful! or, as the Snarkist would say, snawful! It's enough to make any worm turn, let alone Mr. Lewis. There could only be one step farther in the "sinful games" of this writer—he might have said the white waistcoat was dirty. He held his pen at that.

WE have worn a pair of Mr. W. J. Almond's new Patent Stocking Suspenders for over a month, and shall never think of wearing garters again on any account. The stocking is kept up just as well as with a garter, perhaps better; and certainly it is more easy and comfortable, and, doctors say, much more beneficial, especially for those who suffer from varicose veins. Mr. Almond informs us that they may be had of any first-class hosier or draper in the kingdom, or he would send them by post for 2d. extra from his address, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Price—Children's, 1s. 6d.; Young Ladies', 2s.; Ladies', 3s.

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER XX.—THE SACRED MIRROR.

"AND where," Aunt Effra asked, "is Wapping?" It was from no affectation, but from that general ignorance which prevails in the West-end as to localities in the East-end of London.

Explanations, hastily given, satisfied Aunt Effra that the place was within the bounds of civilization, as identical with cab fares and police regulations; and her impatience was hard to control until the time should come when she might solve the great problem of her life. An opportunity soon offered. It was arranged that Aunt Effra should, on her return from the afternoon drive on the Monday, leave Eva at the dress-maker's in Bond-street, under pretence of taking a sharp walk home—she was partial to walking—then meet Felice in a bye-street, take a cab, and drive down to Wapping, the understanding being that she might be able to reach home in time for dinner.

This arrangement was carried out.

Everything befel as it should have done. The journey to Wapping was performed, not without many inquiries on the lady's part as to the nature of the strange localities she was hurried through—as to whether people actually lived in those grim streets, odorous of fried fish, and ate the coarse viands exposed for sale in the miserable shops—till at length the destination was reached. The cab stopped at a given point, where it was to wait, and they proceeded together to a spot with which we are already familiar—the old house by the river-side!

In answer to certain knocks of a peculiar nature which Felice had been instructed to give, the door opened, apparently of itself, a gruff voice bade them enter, and they found themselves in darkness. Out of this darkness a hand was thrust, and the same voice bade her have no fears, but to confide absolutely in the integrity of the sorceress, into whose presence she was about to be admitted.

"Do you think it is all right, Felice?" she whispered to her attendant.

"Quite right, madame; not a doubt, not a doubt."

"You will not leave my side?"

The gruff voice interposed.

"Unfortunately," it said, "only one person can enter the Hall of the Sacred Mirror at once."

"Then perhaps I had better wait for you in the cab, madame?" whispered Felice. "It is well, as a precaution, that some one outside the house should know that you are inside."

"Good, very good; but you don't think there is anything to apprehend?"

"Not the very slightest, I am assured."

"Go, then; wait in the cab at the corner, so as to command a view of the house."

Felice departed, not without a secret chuckle; possibly not without a smile on her face, could it have been perceived.

A few moments, and the gruff voice bade madame enter.

As she was standing in the dark, it was puzzling to know where she should go; but while she hesitated in doubt, there was a sweeping sound, and a curtain, dividing immediately before her face, disclosed to view

a large, lofty room, dimly lit through a single aperture near the roof, whence a shaft of greenish light penetrated, and apparently forming one of a series or suite of chambers. In one corner of this apartment was an oval mirror, six feet in height, draped in black. On a throne raised three steps from the ground in an opposite corner sat a figure, draped from head to foot in a veil—all that was visible being one white hand, with a glittering ring upon it, grasping a wand.

"Mortal!" cried a voice, the voice of the draped figure, "thou wouldst draw the veil of the future, and look face to face upon thy fate?"

"Ye-es," faltered the "mortal."

"Thou canst have thy will," was the reply; "but be warned, knowledge is sorrow. Thou mayest see, but thou mayest also repent the sight. Speak."

Words and tone were alike discouraging; but Aunt Effra had come to learn her destiny, and know it she would.

"I—I think I'll venture, if you don't mind," she faltered.

"What is it thou art minded to know?" asked the voice. "Wouldst thou gaze on him who is to be the partner, the joy and solace of thy life?"

"Exactly."

"Veil thine eyes and summon up thy courage. When next my voice sounds in thine ears, fix thine eyes upon the sacred mirror. Look, but approach not."

Thus adjured, she clasped her hands across her eyes and waited.

There was a long, long pause.

Then a voice, rolling sonorously through the chambers, exclaimed—

"Behold!"

She looked up, and, not a little terrified, turned towards the sacred mirror. At first a mist rose within it, accompanied by the odour of burning incense. This slowly died away, and then with mingled feelings of joy and terror, she beheld a figure shape itself in the mirror's depths, and the figure was unmistakably that of the man she loved.

"Marco!" burst from her lips.

And in the act of uttering this word, she forgot the warning she had received, and rushed towards the mirror.

The figure instantly vanished.

This reminded her of her imprudence, and she with more politeness turned toward the veiled figure to apologize. But the sorceress also had gone; there was only her veil lying on the chair she had occupied.

It was strange, and the situation was a sufficiently trying one. Aunt Effra waited. She could only wait. Profound silence reigned throughout the house; even the noises of the streets were hushed in the distance.

Five minutes passed, ten, twenty, and nothing happened. Nobody came. The silence remained unbroken.

The woman who had so readily dared the future began to be alarmed about the present. She called out, first in a feeble, then in a loud voice. The echo of her words rang through the house, but there was no response.

More terrified than ever, she went up to the mirror and examined it. That yielded nothing; it was simply an antique glass in an ebony frame. She examined the throne, and then passed from the first room into the

next, which the mirror fully reflected at an angle (though she did not observe the circumstance). This in its turn led to a third room, which appeared to be the end of the suite. These rooms had all the like peculiarities—the windows were high and partially blocked up, and there were no doors!

Not a single aperture could she find by means of which she could either call for assistance or make her escape.

Worst of all, night was setting in; it was getting darker and darker, and with every fading ray she felt herself more and more helpless.

"Into what dreadful place have I been betrayed?" she exclaimed, in an agony of despair. "Suppose I should not be able to return in time for dinner—oh, what—what—will Edgar say! Suppose anything should have happened to Felice! Suppose this should be a den of thieves and murderers! Oh, police!—police!"

The cry echoed and re-echoed itself, ascending to the attics, and burying itself in the cellars of the old house, as it seemed; but nothing else resulted. No one replied—no one came. The time passed on; evening yielded to night. The stillness of the grave pervaded the place.

Unable to control her feelings, or to bear the weight of her misery, Aunt Effra sank down beside the throne of the sorceress, and leaning her face on the steps, bemoaned herself, and shed bitter tears, regardless of the ravages such signs of emotion make in an artistically compounded complexion.

CHAPTER XXI.—WHAT CAME OF A JOKE.

HOURS, as it seemed to Aunt Effra, passed away, as she paced the rooms in the old house in which she found herself a prisoner—the victim of a cruel joke, which had been arranged between Marco and Felice out of pure wantonness and love of fun.

It grew utterly dark; but in time the moon rose, and then a flood of light streamed into the apartments. Not a woman to be easily baffled by circumstances, or to yield tamely to any fate against her will, she availed herself of the light to make a careful and minute examination of the suite of rooms.

This yielded one result.

She satisfied herself that behind the throne on which the sorceress had been seated there was a sliding panel, only imperfectly closed. She could put her fingers into the aperture. Seeing this, she came to the natural conclusion that the woman—if woman it was, and she began to have misgivings about that—must have availed herself of this panel to effect her escape.

Convinced of this, she mentally turned the discovery to practical account.

"If this Jezebel could leave the rooms in that way," she argued, "it must be possible for me to do the same."

Summoning up all her courage, she grasped the panel, and found that it moved without a sound. As it moved, the moonlight penetrated beyond it, but disclosed nothing but a brick wall, a couple of feet behind the panelling.

Obviously, this was a passage; but, unfortunately, when the moon did not shine it was quite dark, and she was in total ignorance as to what it might lead to. There might be traps—there might be secret stairs;

indeed, it was impossible to say what dangers might not await the intruder who should venture to explore the secret way.

In some respects Aunt Effra was weak. Her vanity led her into many follies, like that she had been guilty of in venturing into that place, and she had feelings easily wrought upon; but in respect of personal courage she had a lion's bravery. She feared nothing, she feared nobody; and having made up her mind that this was the way out of her difficulty, she resolved to have recourse to it. At once, therefore, she caught up her long dress, turned it inside out over her head, as if about to run through a heavy shower, and then stepped in through the opening left by the panel.

The ground was soft, but firm.

Taking a last glimpse at the room, bright in the moonlight, she turned her face towards the darkness, and moved slowly on in the only direction in which it was possible for her to move.

Very slowly, very cautiously, she proceeded step by step, meeting with no impediment, and apparently coming to no end. It was quite dark. There was an earthy smell, with an occasional whiff of rats; and, most unpleasant of all, the outstretched hands came in contact with occasional swinging ropes of cobwebs, the growth of years.

It was a detestable place; but obviously it must lead somewhere.

It did. After many steps, Aunt Effra's outstretched hands came in contact with an impediment. Her nails struck against wood. Further progress was barred by a door.

"At last!" she murmured—"thank goodness!"

But her devout expression of thankfulness was a little premature. There was a door; but she could not open it. There seemed to be no handle, no lock, no means of fastening or unfastening; but it was fast as rock.

Doubling her fists, she thundered at this door in the vague hope that some one might hear and come to her assistance. It was in vain. She might as well have struck at the brick wall. The dull, dead sound of the blows from her feeble hands alone met her ears.

More terrified than ever, irritated and annoyed beyond measure, she knew not what to do, and was about to retire in the forlorn hope of some one having by that time returned to the rooms to release her, when her attention was arrested by a sound on the further side of the door.

There were footsteps—there were voices in conversation, as if persons were engaged in altercation, as they entered a room.

"Pagnell was taken?" a voice inquired.

"Yes," was the answer.

"Distinctly charged with conspiring to defraud in this business of the *Hannah*?"

"There wasn't a doubt about the charge."

"But you—how came they to connect you with it? Or did they venture simply because you happened to be in Pagnell's rooms at the time?"

"No; that devil, Framlingham's manager—Pembrose I think they call him—is in league with the girl Ruby, Framlingham's daughter, whom I threw over, and they have fished out something—heaven knows what!—to connect me with this affair. And it would have gone hard with me, too, but for Zerina—sent there,

I suppose, to give warning that all was not well. But now about Pagnell. He must have the best counsel money can get him, and nothing must be spared to get him set free."

The other seemed to demur to this.

"What's the use?" he asked. "The game's up so far as he goes. After this, he's a marked man, and what use can he be to us?"

"Idiot!" was the fierce response, "can't you see that our only safety lies in convincing him that we are true to him in his misfortune, as we were in his prosperity? Do you think that if convicted through any want of exertion or generosity on our part, he would hesitate to be revenged on us, by denouncing every man Jack of us? Trust him. Our only safety lies in making him safe. And now, what arrangements had best be made?"

At this point it seemed as if the speakers drew together over the fire to discuss the subject of such moment to them; and though a word here and there was audible, Aunt Effra heard little more that conveyed any distinct meaning to her.

But she had heard quite enough to alter her first hasty intention of thundering at the door, and demanding to be set free.

In one of the speakers she distinctly recognized her niece's lover, Edmund Harcourt. There was no mistaking his voice; and if even she had doubted the identity of the man, it was established to her satisfaction at least by what had fallen from his lips.

The allusion to the ship, *Hannah*, recalled what had happened in her brother's drawing-room only the night before. She had not thought of it much then, but now it came back on her mind with vivid intensity. Edgar Knowles, she remembered, had simply cited the statement of the newspaper in his hand, that a claim of twenty thousand pounds had been refused by insurers on the ground of fraud and conspiracy, and immediately Harcourt had demanded with the utmost anxiety and trepidation, "What ship?" The effect which the answer to that question, the simple words "The *Hannah*," had produced was not likely to be effaced from her memory; nor was the fact that he had himself mentioned the name she had just heard—the name of Pagnell—as connected with the affair.

Remembering all this, and having heard what she had, was it strange that Aunt Effra should be satisfied that Harcourt was the speaker, and that he was criminally involved in a matter of the most disreputable character?

Was it, moreover, surprising that she should resolve to beat a retreat before her presence was discovered, seeing that people of desperate character are not wont to treat with peculiar delicacy those known to be in possession of their dangerous secrets?

As fast as practicable, she retreated along the narrow passage she had already traversed; this time with alacrity, because the way was known, and there was nothing to apprehend.

The moonlight still streamed into the first of the suite of apartments as she emerged from the secret doorway.

It gave a ghostly and unreal aspect to the deserted place—filling it with grim shadows; and Aunt Effra shuddered as she emerged, lest in doing so she might encounter prying eyes, or find herself face to face with

those who might question her as to what she had seen or heard.

Happily, there was no ground for apprehension.

The grim shadows had it all to themselves. No angry form stepped out from their depths—no threatening voice demanded of her the secrets of her adventure.

On the other hand, the place seemed as deserted as ever, and the chances of escape quite as remote.

This was a mystery she could not fathom, and her uneasiness was all the greater from what she had heard since coming under that roof. The coincidences were so strange. That Edmund Harcourt should have come there, of all places, struck her with amazement. And as she thought it over, she saw how almost impossible it would be for her to turn to account the knowledge she had obtained.

"It will be necessary," she reflected, "for me to confess to Edgar what brought me here. No, I will die first! What! confess to a man like him, with all the excessive stupidity of an Englishman, and not an ounce of romance in his composition, that I came here to have my future revealed to me, and the secret misgivings of my heart satisfied? Never! Besides, if I did, and told him of this coincidence, he would never believe it. Men always mistrust women's sagacity. He would say at once that I was mistaken; that as I had not seen the man, I had allowed my fancy to play tricks with me, and that it wasn't him. As if I couldn't swear to the voice out of a thousand. Never was anything so strange, so perplexing, and so unfortunate."

She was in the act of uttering these words half aloud, when the door of the room—the door by which she had first entered to consult the sorceress—suddenly burst open, and a figure ran towards her with a cry of mingled joy and consternation.

It was Felice.

Those were the arms of the French maid that encircled her neck, and those her eyes which, full of alarm, looked up into her face.

"Oh, madame!—oh, my dear, dear mistress!" she cried out, "this is of all the most unfortunate. I dared not come to you—I dared not send to you; for as I waited with the cab I saw *him* pass—I saw him enter—"

"Him, girl?" said Aunt Effra, with bitterness—"who is 'him'?"

"Thank gracious, you have not seen him!" cried the girl, dropping on her knees and raising her hands in a transport of fervour. "It was Mr. Edmund Harcourt entered the house."

"You are sure of this?" demanded the lady, eagerly.

"Oh, most sure."

"You could not have been mistaken? Then, I am right. It was he."

Felice looked amazed and concerned.

"You have seen him, then, madame? You met? Oh, it was this that I feared. It was for this that I was so desolate. I dared not ask for you, or he might have remembered, and our secret mission would have been known the town over. But you have met?"

"No, girl," was the answer; "but now, tell me—where is this sorceress woman, and why has she left me here in this desolate place alone for hours? What is the meaning of it?"

Felice shrugged her shoulders, and raised her eyes till only the whites of them were visible.

She dared not confess that this was arranged between herself and Marco, as part of their quiet little joke with the old lady—which joke, by the way, did not contemplate the appearance of Edmund Harcourt on the scene, and the consequent detention of Marco (who had himself assumed the disguise of the sorceress, as well as appearing in the magic mirror) beyond all reasonable bounds. Felice dared not admit anything. She therefore broke into a torrent of lamentations, blaming herself for ever having been a party to the arrangement, and for bringing her estimable lady into such wild, unknown parts, out of the range of civilization; and so violent was her regret, so exaggerated her self-reproaches, that Aunt Effra was soon glad to silence her on any terms, and gladly allowed herself to be dragged out of that terrible house, thanking her stars when she once more found herself in the cab, moving rapidly towards the West-end.

The Man in the Open Air.

“**E**XTREMES meet”—not so with rivers; their tails, unlike the serpent, emblem of eternity, do not enter their mouths, although the latter are even larger than their heads. Extremes, however, often meet upon rivers, when the contemplative angler is run down by the reckless owner of a steam-yawl, or the ragged, unkempt boatman sits *vis-à-vis* with the aristocratic fair. But upon few rivers are there such wide extremes to be met with during the summer months as upon the silver Lea, rendered so famous by Izaak Walton.

The Lea, which rises at Lea Marsh, near Dunstable, possesses its peculiar beauties, more particularly in its course through Hatfield Park, the seat of the Marquis of Salisbury and the domains of Woolners. Then between the latter and Hertford it increases in interest until it enters that town. A short distance before it reaches Hertford, it is joined by the lovely little river Mimeram, or Maran, which is one string of exquisite artistic bits, connecting equally picturesque villages, amongst which is Welwyn, where the “Night Thoughts” were composed, and upon which stream is the beautiful park of Panshanger, the domain of Earl Cowper. There are other pretty tributaries near this: the Beane, which has its source near Yardley, and gives vivacity and life to Woodhall Park at Watton; and the Rib, which, rising near Buntingford, receives the Quin in the vicinity of Hamels Park, and, after gliding to the west of Ware Park, joins the Lea.

But can we pass Amwell without a word—albeit that of another? What says John Scott of Amwell, one of the small fraternity of Quaker poets?—

“How picturesque the view! where up the side
Of that steep bank her roofs of russet thatch
Rise mixed with trees, above whose swelling tops
Ascends the tall church tower, and, loftier still,
The hill’s extended ridge.”

The prospect from the hill is indeed very fine. But let us avoid the formal cuts made for the purposes of navigation, and follow the ancient flow of the river. What a treat does such a ramble present for the next few miles—indeed, until we get to Rye House, where,

after refreshing ourselves with a long pull at Ind and Coope’s exhilarating brew, we find a startling change by wandering through the admirably kept gardens which surround both the hostelry and “the grey pile of history,” from the wildness and exuberance of the fields to the refinement and cultivation of nature. The walk along the river is now somewhat tame, until we reach Broxbourne; and here again is a floral treat presented to us for which the Rye may have partly prepared us, but which exceeds—and why not confess it?—the powers of our pen. Surely we, who are somewhat shallow in botany, and are not deep as the bee in the sweets of flowers, may acknowledge being wanting in description, when the learned editor of the *Gardener’s Magazine* thus sums up his columns of eulogy:—“It is the most finished, most beautiful, most tasteful garden I have ever entered.” And the *Times*, ever careful of giving testimonials, says:—“Broxbourne Gardens, on the banks of the river Lea, is a place of highly respectable character.” What is then left for us? Can we overleap these two most unimpeachable authorities in our praise? That would be arrogance indeed. We shall therefore be content to say that our thanks are due to the presiding genius of the place for a great mental and intellectual entertainment, as delightfully served, beneath the cool shadows of the luxurious foliage with which the parterres are blended and interspersed, as it has ever been our good fortune to enjoy, and that we bade a silent but grateful adieu to this paradise of Hertfordshire, with a most grateful sense of the good such scenes were likely to infuse amongst the grosser instincts and sympathies of our nature.

We are still on the river Lea, having passed Cheshunt, Waltham—with its Abbey on the one side and its Cross on the other—and gazed upwards towards the wooded hills of Epping Forest, with the glorious old ivied church of Chingford on the left, and caught a glimpse of Enfield and Edmonton, in the churchyard of which dear Charles Lamb lies. Then Tottenham and its Mills follow; and then—but what means this enormous assemblage? Some popular preacher, perhaps, has chosen the marshes, no London church being large enough to contain his followers. No; that shout, coarse, harsh, and grating, mixed with filthy oaths and blasphemy, could scarcely awake the uplands to greet a man of God! Another and another shout—how hoarse and vulgar!—and a rush is made towards the river. Boats with their living freights of unskilled oarsmen pull in reckless haste and endless confusion towards one spot, jamming, crushing, and entangling their frail craft—swearing, cursing, and dealing ample supplies of water, and even blows with boat-hook or oar, upon all heads within reach, adding to the general scramble.

“What is going on here?” we asked of a man a shade more respectable than the unwashed type, which is of the lowest.

“Cat,” was the curt reply.

“Cat!” we thought—“some new game.”

“And where’s the cat?” we inquired.

“Can’t yer use yer hies?—him’s the cat—leastwise, he’s to pull the cat.”

Then, assured that we were really the ignoramus our question suggested, the fellow became communicative.

“It’s a go—there’s never no cat. That ’ere cove thinks he has the strength to pull a cat into the water

from the opposite side, so he's put with his back to the water, with a rope under his arms, and he's to pull the cat across the river, or stand a gallon of beer, which stakes the humpire holds. Now, you'll see."

"Why," we observed, "there does not appear to be any cat, but we can see three or four men hidden under the bank, and can trace the rope across the road to where they are."

"Of course," whispered the fellow, "that's the fun."

The fun!—the fun was the poor dupe's death; for the rope broke, and left him in the middle of the river to drown; the practical and murderous jokers running away with shrieks of laughter, while their victim was struggling for his life.

This description of amusement was varied with dog-fighting, tossing and other gambling, shooting at small birds—nearly every twentieth man on the marshes carrying a firearm of some kind or other; and thus for two or more good miles along the lower part of the Lea does this sort of degradation recur upon every Saturday afternoon; and we are told that it is ten times worse the whole of Sunday, but we cannot see how this is possible.

Thus we come back to what we started from. "Extremes meet" even upon rivers, and should there be any doubt upon the subject, let the reader select any Saturday or Sunday, and follow our footsteps. We would warn him, however, that it is not every decently dressed person who can walk from Lea Bridge to Stratford upon such occasions without molestation or insult—if not positive material or bodily injury. Should he further wish to see a specimen of that surging element called the "rough," which does not include the industrious, he will become painfully impressed with the enormous power for mischief which is lying dormant in our midst.

If Broxbourne, then, be "the paradise of Hertfordshire," how shall we designate these marshes on the holiest of days?

An Elastic Subject.

IT is to be hoped that nature's stock of *Ficus elastica*, the caoutchouc or india-rubber tree, is not likely to give out; for the way in which the sap, juice, gum, or whatever it is, of this tree is utilized is getting to be something astonishing. It seems but the other day that india-rubber was used only for two purposes—namely, to rub out pencil marks, and to chew at school for the purpose of making a "pop-patch;" while now, since the discovery that it can easily be dissolved in naphtha, and mixed with sulphur or vulcanized, it is perfectly wonderful what uses the gum can be applied to.

Here are a few, taken from a little work sent forth to the public by a firm of manufacturers on Ludgate-hill, Messrs. Currie, Thomson, and Co.

It seems that the processes for rendering caoutchouc or india-rubber unadhesive, and also resistant of heat or cold, commonly called "vulcanized," are the inventions of Mr. Thomas Hancock, for which he obtained a patent in 1843. By the latter process, the character of caoutchouc is materially changed, being made permanently elastic in climatic heat or cold, and capable of enduring very high-exposures. It is by this means greatly increased in elasticity and strength, and is no

longer soluble in essential oils at common temperatures. The improvements in caoutchouc, by these inventions, have made it applicable to so many new uses, that new patents are being applied for every day by persons applying and adapting it to their various purposes.

First and foremost, this hot weather, among the purposes to which india-rubber is applied is that of watering the garden; and now, instead of lugging about a heavy watering-pot, we procure a few yards of hose about the thickness of one's finger, connect it with the water-tap, and then, with branch and spreader, treat our garden as if it were a great fire that wanted putting out.

After we have done, we go in and wipe our shoes on a honeycomb door-mat; meantime the maids below have possibly been washing, and sending the water out of the garments with an American clothes-wringer.

If, while watering, we fear the damp, we can have either india-rubber shoes, goloshes, or boots, which will answer as well for cricket, yachting, or fishing, on which water trip we never go without a waterproof coat; and if one's wife is our companion, she can have a cloak of the material, with hood.

Talking of this latter lady, there is a whole catalogue of little domestic articles she can have for the house or nursery, from an apron to a piece of india-rubber sponge. While to amuse and make healthy the dear children, there are bells, baby jumpers, parlour skates, and chest expanders.

But one cannot classify amongst so many matters. We can have tubing to our gas lamps, so as to accommodate that by which we read; we can put india-rubber round our doors to exclude draughts, and use ring-bands of all sizes, from that of a threepenny-piece to the circumference of a cart-wheel.

Cushions, too, blown out with air; pillows and beds, elastic, grateful, and comforting; sponging baths that will afterwards squeeze up into nothing; swimming belts; boats that can be blown full of air, and which will then carry two easily, and cannot be sunk when full of water; surgical and doctorial articles; and then we come to a long and interesting series that commend themselves to all Englishmen—fishing stockings, boots, hats, and bags; knapsacks for tourists, enclosing dry garments within; game bags; and, capital friends for drivers, carriage and gig aprons of all patterns, such as will set at defiance the wildest storm.

Next we come to the stable, to find all sorts of horsey utilities—knee-caps, stockings, boots, rings, everything that has previously been made in leather, now turned out by the soft, elastic india-rubber. As to the hard, ebony-looking vulcanite, the difficulty here is to say what is not made of india-rubber; for in this book everything is mentioned, from a tea cup to a tooth comb, and from ladies' chains to charms—buckles and belts, toothpicks and toilet bottles, brooches of elegant design, earrings antique and modern, and bracelets that would win the heart of an empress.

But enough; nothing can be more dangerous than to write an article on india-rubber. The substance stretches without limit, and the article threatens to do the same. And though caoutchouc may be elastic, printers' limits are not; so we reluctantly conclude our remarks by asking a question. Why are there no honeycombed india-rubber omnibus cushions, such as would give outside

riders a dry seat in the wettest of weather? We make the suggestion a present to Messrs. Currie, Thomson, and Co.

In Pursuit of El Dorado.

THE history of early American adventure and exploration has its fairy-like romance in the expeditions set on foot to find El Dorado, the country of gold, and those whose object it was to discover what would have been more useful even than the land of untold and untellable wealth—the Fountain of Perpetual Youth.

When we read of these expeditions, the names and titles of the leaders, and the knights who followed in their train, it seems as if it could not be sober history; but that, by some mischief in the imps of the press, a page of the "Seven Champions of Christendom" had slipped into the dull chronicles—as if some day, when the sober muse of History nodded over her endless labours, wild and tricksome Fancy had written the leaf and turned it over hastily, unperceived and undiscovered. But it was not so. It is all plain fact. The stubborn pursuit of the north-west passage to India through the treacherous ice of the north is not more real than the hunt for El Dorado, or for the Fountain of Youth. Sir Walter Raleigh's fate alone revives our recollections, and the fable was real enough to lure him to his ruin.

Among these expeditions was one which led to the discovery of the Amazon, and, failing to give the clue to El Dorado, gave a new fable of the tribe of Female Warriors, whose ancient prototypes have given the common name of the river.

Peru had fallen beneath the power of Pizarro. His brother, Gonzalo Pizarro, led away by tales of Paititi, a golden city and golden land west of the Peruvian mountains, set out in 1542, with four hundred companions, through the wild, unbroken forest, to reduce a realm which, in splendour and renown, was to cast his brother's achievement into the shade.

Plodding on through the tangled masses of tropical vegetation, without a guide or a chart, startled by bird and beast of strange hue and form and habit, taking the note of the deep-toned bell-bird for the chime of some distant city, the party of Pizarro began to falter. Orellana was sent with a detachment to push rapidly on, and solve the great problem.

The main body followed, but in vain they awaited Orellana's return. Death and battle thinned their ranks, and the remnant reached the confluence of the Coca and Napo, pale and exhausted, more like ghosts than living men. Starvation seemed their only prospect as they cast themselves down beside the great river, which rolled away before them.

But relief was nearer than they thought.

On the opposite shore was the one faithful man of Orellana's party.

Sanchez de Vargas had refused to go on when Orellana resolved to make his way to the sea, and leave Pizarro to his fate.

There he had remained, and his woodcraft had taught him to find in the forest abundant nourishment in the nuts, the fruits, and the turtle eggs that nature supplied.

He soon joined the starving men; not to tell them of the discovery of Paititi and its wealth, and more than Oriental luxury, but to reveal to Pizarro the secret of Orellana's absence—the story of his desertion.

But he could tell of the rich stores of food to be gathered; and, recruited with these, and loaded with a supply, Pizarro, after overcoming the terrible disappointment, which had well-nigh cost him his reason, and life itself, commenced his march back in the realm of the Incas, with the faithful De Vargas at his side.

The golden-roofed city of Paititi is still unfound.

The Seat of War.

NO more appropriate time for a sketch of the history of the Servian principality could be found than the present, when its people have boldly thrown off the Ottoman yoke, and struck for freedom. It is a sorry story, that of the Servian provinces—blood, blood, blood, riot, rapine, burning villages, violence in every conceivable form. From the day when it was a Roman province until now, it has been the seat of war. The Romans fought hard to subdue the Thracians and Gauls. In the days of Ostrogoth and Hun, there was fierce fighting in the beautiful province, and then came the time of the Serbs. These people, from the ninth century, have been Christians, who adopted the tenets of the Eastern Church.

The power of the Serb increased, while that of the Byzantine Empire slowly fell away; and at last, in a very decisive battle, the Greek army were destroyed, and the Servians spread their empire southward, eastward, and westward, till they became a great nation, under the name of the Roumelians. Their greatness, however, was not lasting. Their king—Stephen—died just in the height of his prosperity, and at a time when he was preparing an army of great extent to prosecute his ambitious plans of extending the empire. Then great changes followed, all of a downward tendency. The Moslems began to move north with conquering stride; city after city fell before them, and at last, towards the end of the fourteenth century, they took possession of Roumelia, after a bloody battle, in which their King—Lascar, the last King of Servia—was taken prisoner; and, with all the gentleness of the Turk towards his prisoner, the unhappy monarch was slain by Murad or Amurath—beheaded in his tent.

A long struggle, enduring many years, followed, and the Turks spread over the land, introducing their religion, building mosques, and completely driving out the Servians, who, to the number of fifty thousand families, took flight across the Danube, and in Hungary found a home and friendly allies. As for the Bosnians, they took matters as they came, adopted the policy of peace, set aside their Christianity, and took to the religion of the invader. The Huns proved to be bold and daring allies of the Servians, and more wars ensued; for the Turk was hated with the deadly hatred of an opposing religion. In the course of time, by the help of their allies, the Servians, about the year 1450, reconquered their country, and were upon the point of driving forth their invaders. Greek Christianity was about to be triumphant, when the Servians learned that their allies, the Huns, were about to secede from Greek Christianity, and join the Western or Roman



IN PURSUIT OF EL DORADO.—(Page 246.)

Catholic Church. Here was a terrible cause for separation. "Better Mahomet than Rome!" cried the Servians; and actually on account of this religious difference they separated themselves from their allies, and became once more the vassals of the Turk, who promised all things now that he could not conquer. The Bosnians followed suit, and these latter and the Servians of position and property became renegades.

The outcome of this is that the Greek Christian Servians of the present day are sprung from the lower orders, who did not abjure their religion and follow Islamism. All the principal Servians of to-day count back to the peasantry. Prince Milan and Kara Georgeovitch were both descended from the peasantry, who had maintained their faith while their wealthier neighbours turned Moslems, were absorbed by the Turk, and died out.

During the next three hundred years oppression and war went hand in hand through the land of Servia. It was completely under the Turk, and became the battle ground in the war with Hungary. It was then divided—part given to Austria, and afterwards given back to the Turks. Revolt followed in consequence, and twenty thousand Servians were slaughtered. Oppression then had the rule. The people of Servia were treated like dogs by the Moslems. Arms were forbidden; the Servians had to salute their masters; and matters became so bad that the people took to living in the country, leaving the Turks undisputed control of the towns. Occasionally they revolted, after some bitter piece of cruelty, fled to the mountains, and took to a freebooting life, after the fashion of our own Robin Hood, their victims for plundering being the Turks only, but these were pillaged without mercy. Their life became quite one of romance, for they were the idols of the peasantry; and if pursued, there were so many friendly hands to give them shelter that they lived a life of comparative impunity. Theirs was the true romance of brigandage, and they lived hopeful of the fall of their oppressors, and waiting for the happy days of freedom to come. Their oppressors were little Pachas, whose followers thoroughly carried out their masters' wishes. The Janissaries, too, had their reign of terror over the unfortunate people.

A hero always arises at such times in the history of a country, and the one in Servia was Kara, or Black George. He, too, was only a peasant, who became a robber chief; but his was the hand that freed Servia. He lived at a time when the Turks were meditating a general massacre of the cowering, dissatisfied, revengeful people. Kara George sent forth his proclamations; the people flocked to his side; and with ten thousand desperate men, badly armed, victualled, and prepared, he took the field, beating the Turks by sheer valour in contest after contest, till he had completely driven them out, thus achieving the freedom of his country. Russia supported him for a time, and in his rule he showed really great qualities. These were, however, marred by his cruelties. Turks who had surrendered were massacred wholesale, and to all the race he was a most bitter and vindictive foe. Neither relative nor friend was spared who opposed his laws, even his own brother being by his orders hung; but in spite of difficulties he displayed all the qualities of a great man—a man of resource, and quickness to appreciate opportunities.

In 1812, Russia withdrew its support, and the conse-

quence was that the State of Servia lost its coherence, and dropped rapidly to pieces. The Turks, who renewed their attacks, became the masters once more, and Kara George had to flee for his life, leaving behind Milosh Abrenovitch, one of his chief officers. This man made terms with the Turks, for opposition was useless; and as soon as the treaty was signed, the Turks behaved with their customary duplicity—breaking the treaty in every way, and behaving at Belgrade with the most fearful atrocity. Christians were impaled by the hundred, children slaughtered, women outraged, and a general massacre was carried on, such as it seems impossible to believe as a fact, taking place as it did in the memory of our oldest men.

Such horrors never die in a people's memory, and, as a matter of course, they only abided their time. Milosh was valiant, prudent, and a clever general; and now, in his turn, he rose up as the liberator of his people. He had a great following. The people placed in him implicit confidence, and for fifteen years war was carried on against the oppressors.

At last, in 1830, the Servians were in a position to make good terms with their oppressors. The terms were that the Turks should hold six fortresses alone in the country, having no right elsewhere; the management politically was placed beyond them, and the only claim they had was that of a yearly tribute. Milosh now became acknowledged Prince of Servia. He was, after all, but a peasant, and behaved with all the rough injustice of a barbaric chief. Considering himself Lord Paramount, he was guilty of the follies of the rude and illiterate—making his servants into high officials or military leaders; insisting upon buying land at his own price; having his own productions sold higher than the market price, and behaving a good deal like the proverbial beggar on horseback. He was treacherous, unjust, and bloody in the extreme. He got Kara George into his hands, caused his murder, beheaded wholesale, and seized upon the lands of those who appealed to him for justice. This could not go on for long, and the result was that, after a period of misrule which lasted for eight years, he was deprived of his power, and Milan, his son, reigned in his stead.

Death removed this prince in a very short time, and the next son, Michal, took the reins of government and held them for four years, to be expelled in his turn, as his father had been deposed before him. This time the race of the original liberator was chosen—Prince and Kara George's son, Alexander Georgeovitch, became ruler. He kept his place for sixteen years, and only abdicated by order in his turn.

The Servians then had been looking back for a successor, and they recalled old Milosh to the throne, in memory of his former deeds. This grand old man, although eighty years of age, was full of vigour and strength of mind, ruling the land well till he died, about a year afterwards, and making way for Michal, who succeeded to the reins of government once again. Disturbances with the Turks occurred spasmodically, the most important being the bombardment of Belgrade. At last, Michal fell beneath the assassin's knife, and he was succeeded by his nephew, Milan, then only a boy.

This prince has succeeded to a turbulent reign. He is now but a very young man, but imbued with the traditions of the daring feats of his ancestors. One of the

past traditions of his people relates to the doings of Stephan Durban, and connected therewith is the hope of forming a grand kingdom after the overthrow of the Turks—a kingdom whose natural boundaries would be the Danube, the Mediterranean, the Bosphorus, the Black and Adriatic Seas. There is plenty of room, then, for ambition; and the Servians are essentially an ambitious people—proud, overbearing, and entertaining a supreme contempt for their more civilized neighbours. They are high Tories of the most ultra class.

What is to follow time only will show. Certainly no more satisfactory period could have been chosen for a blow for freedom. Turkey is in an unsettled state; the Khedive seems ready to waver in his allegiance; and certainly the wishes of all lovers of liberty must go with the daring band who are striving as Christians to cast off the yoke of an effete, voluptuous, cruel monarchy—a power that about the most unpopular member of the House of Commons very pithily observed was an anachronism whose fall had been sounded. Sympathy must go with the Christian striving to free himself from the Turk; and this sympathy Prince Milan seems to have secured. If he succeeds, he lives in times when he may make, if not a great nation of his people, one at least that may be viewed with respect by European powers, and leave to his successors the building up of greatness that does not fall to his share.

Out of Season.

TO-MORROW is the first of May,
Of old renowned for vernal flowers,
But now, alas! I grieve to say,
We've every chance of hail and showers.*

The north-east blasts are blowing keen,
And by their roughness master all;
Not moment fit for bard, I ween,
To sing a spring-time pastoral.

No nightingale's sweet notes salute
The primrose and its flowers of gold;
The feathered choir all are mute,
Drenched with the rain, half dead with cold.

No fish rise in the turbid streams,
No insects on their surface fly;
Each pretty, trembling wild flower seems
To hang its head, and wish to die.

In vain, with artificial flies,
And many an oft-repeated cast,
To snare a trout the angler tries—
It will not face the wintry blast.

No sport rewards the anglers' skill,
Except—I write with deep reproach—
Those who, without compunction, kill
The silly, greedy, gravid roach.

Oh! Queen of May, on thy first day,
Dispel these stormy winds and showers,
And all thy wonted charms display,
In birds and insects, songs and flowers.

* This meteorological prophecy was strictly fulfilled.

Oh! Sun, who now, alas! so long
Hast kept from us thy kindling ray,
Wake longing nature into song,
Shine brightly on the Queen of May.

Queer Cards.

CHAPTER XIV.—THE KNAVE OF CLUBS TAKES HIS DEAL.

"**A**S none of you seem likely to have a game with me," said the Knave of Clubs, still handling his dirty pack of cards as if he loved it, "I suppose I may as well tell my story like the rest. Not that there's much to tell. I can't say, for instance, as I ever took to body-snatching."

The Knave of Spades looked rather angrily at the Knave of Clubs, but the Knave of Clubs only winked good-humouredly and knowingly at the Knave of Spades, and went on.

"Nor that I ever robbed a lady of my own private acquaintance!"

And with infinite expression of geniality and good-nature, the Knave of Clubs winked at the Knave of Diamonds.

"Nor that my life's done so much harm to anybody else as that gentleman's!"

And the Knave of Clubs looked soberly and sadly at the Knave of Hearts, who, when his own story was done, had dropped his head wearily upon the table, as one whose interest in the whole affair had ceased.

"But my life hasn't been a very jolly one for all that—and it isn't a bright look-out that lies before me now. Not by no manner of means! I've been a-tumbling and a-tricking ever since I was born, almost. They'd twisted all my limbs about pretty well before I was ten years old. Father was an acrobat, mother wasn't anything in particular, but could turn her hand to most things. I was born in a court, and my name—not but what I've tried lots of others—my name's George Garret."

"Lord, I could keep my tongue wagging for hours if I was to tell you all the larks I've seen, and all the ups and downs I've had—mostly downs. Now and again I've drawn my ten pounds a week in the Christmas season; but, bless you, it don't go so very far after all, don't ten pounds a week, when you've got to knock about of a night. And then I've been out of a berth for months—knocking about racecourses and such like, doing tricks with cards. There, if any gentleman present wants to see a thing or two, I'll put this here card—"

He drew one out—it was the Knave of Clubs.

"Into my hat whilst he thinks it's in my hand. It's all done by the pass."

No one seemed to care for the trick.

"Just as you like. Here's another. I take a piece of paper, so—"

He suited the action to the word.

"And a lead pencil, so. There is no deception, gentlemen, you will observe. All is fair and above-board, confederates not being required in this little demonstration."

He wrote a word or two upon the scrap of paper, and then tossed it over to the Knave of Hearts; upon whose face, as he looked up, there was a sudden ex-

pression of wonder; in whose eyes, as they met the meaning glance of the Knave of Clubs, there was surprise, there was bewilderment, there was pain; whose voice, when he spoke, was impatient, yet feeble.

"How have you learnt all this?" he asked. "I thought there was no great chance of my name, or hers, being known here; and yet—"

Said the Knave of Clubs, with a professional air—

"Gentlemen all, you will observe the effect of this little experiment. I don't mean to assert as it is done by magic, nor by spirits. Quite contrary. Nor by the pass, nor by any of the little tricks as I get my living by—when I do get it, which such is not invariably the case. It is done by chance, by a little common sense, and putting two and two together. Gentlemen all, a few years ago—"

"Let the story be for you and me alone," said the Knave of Hearts.

"The name shall be, sir," said the Knave of Clubs; "as for the story, it can hurt no one, so by your good leave I shall tell it."

"One question first: is he dead?"

"He is dead."

Wearily, wearily the Knave of Hearts sank back into his old position, muttering—

"One more corpse, one more corpse. . . . Go on with the story."

"Gentlemen all, a few years ago, as I told you, I was one of a circus troupe. We were travelling on the north-east coast, and one night, I remember, there was a performance at Hartlepool. The place was pretty full, and we netted a little money, so we arranged to give another affair next night.

"Well, after I'd left the circus on the first night I got knocking about the streets and taking a drop or two of drink. We were all pretty sure to do that; and I tell you what, it's not half an easy thing to get along without it, for the life's a hard one, always was, and always will be, and there's no two ways about it. I was with our clown; he didn't look much of a Mr. Merryman now he'd got his paint off, and I wasn't much like the Bounding Brother of Asia. They called me and another chap—as was steadier than me, and now keeps a public at Hoxton—the Bounding Brothers of Asia. Lord knows why! I never went to Asia, and as for him, he was Whitechapel.

"Of course, all my fleshings and spangles and what now were locked up before I left the place, and there was nothing about either of us to show we were professionals. Well, at one public we dropped into there were a lot of seafaring men, and the conversation happened to be about our circus; so I just gives the clown a nudge, as much as to say, 'Let's hear what Jack thinks of us.' Well, Jack didn't seem to think much of me, and so I honestly tell you; Jack thought a good deal of the clown, and he thought a good deal of the horsemanship; but as for me, bless you, he didn't seem to think there was anything very wonderful in what I'd done.

"I should like to see him,' meaning me—'I should like to see him on the main truck,' said one Jack.

"It's all very well a-dancing about on a rope wot's been stretched for you,' said another Jack; 'but it's another guess sort of thing to do it in a gale of wind.'

"Well, you know, I felt there was a little truth in what they said, so I just chimed in with it.

"Well, it's a jolly easy way of getting blunt, and that's all about it,' said one fellow; 'and, what's more, I shouldn't mind doing it myself.'

"I pricked up my ears at this, as you may guess; and we all got very chatty and sociable.

"Well, this fellow, he was a handsome chap enough, with dark eyes and hair, as *you* know very well, sir. His manner was strange-like, and he was just a little on in liquor. Well, we got talking more and more; and, when the gin began to tell on us, the clown and me, we let out what our business was. Well, we got to be the lords of the place like, and it was 'Name your drink,' and 'Name your drink,' with a lot of them. But this man I'm speaking of, he was chattier than any of them; not that he was the jolliest of them. Jolly! there wasn't much of that about him. Broken down he looked more—and tired, and as if he'd got something preying on his mind. So, from one thing to another, he began to tell me of a lot of tricks that sailors do, now and again, for the fun of it; and it struck me that a good few of them might be worked in our circus. To make a long story short, it was settled that the man should call at the circus in the morning and see the proprietor.

"Well, I took him in, and he certainly showed us a lot of things that we all thought would draw, with a little management; and the upshot of it was that he joined the troop, saying that he was sick of the sea, and that it was only a life fit for a dog. Perhaps he was right, after all; but he didn't make a change much for the better. Of course, I shouldn't have introduced him if he'd been taking the bread out of my mouth, but we were doing very well, as I told you, and I was overworked, so that it was a comfortable thing rather than not to have a new hand for some of my business.

"It wasn't many days before I found out that my man had something on his mind. He was very queer of a night often, hollering out of a sudden, and looking like a man possessed; and then he'd talk sometimes in his sleep when I was near him, and they weren't pleasant things to hear that he talked about. I gave him a hint of this, for I didn't want him to get in any trouble or bother; and, I tell you honestly, I had come to have a liking for the man, perhaps because I brought him out. Very thick we became, quite regular chums, you know.

"Well, times got bad. There were rows amongst us, and the circus was at last broke up, and me and Jack—I'll call him Jack, sir, never fear!—we were turned loose again, but we agreed to stick together as long as we could.

"I don't know what we didn't do to get a bit of bread, and a lot of very queer things they were, I tell you. But the luck wasn't good. Somehow, things went against us; but we didn't quarrel, for all that, but seemed to stick closer to each other the worse the luck got. I don't mean to stick up for being a saint, or anything of the sort. It's not my line. It wasn't his line neither. We were vagabonds both of us, if you like to call us so. You won't hurt my feelings. I haven't much to hurt, perhaps. Never mind that. I know that he stuck to me honest and true, and honest and true I stuck to him.

"And, look here, sir; when Jack had told me all his

story; when he'd told me of the worst thing he'd ever done, I said to him then, and I say it to you now, that what he did to you wasn't a tenth part so bad as what you did to his sister. Like it or not, whichever you will, I said it then, I say it now, and I'll say it till I die whenever I say anything about it at all."

Wearily, wearily the Knave of Hearts answered—

"You are right. God knows how I have suffered for what I did, and I don't try to defend it!"

"No, sir, I know that; but if you'll let a plain man say so, repentance is very cheap, and not defending a thing isn't undoing it. I haven't much more to say. He'd tried to find his sister after he'd had that fight with you, and never found her. He went to Devonshire, and found his mother was dead too. There wasn't a soul in the village left that he cared for. He looked over the old bridge—and it was your account of that old bridge as first put me on the scent—and he saw where his father had died. He went up to the little churchyard one night, and he saw where father and mother were lying, and next morning he came away. He'd followed the sea since then; didn't know whether you'd outlived the blow or not; but swore that he'd never try to strike such another, come what might. A vagabond he was, sir, and a drunken sailor he'd been; but he stuck to me honest and true, and I tell you there was good in him after all."

The honest old Knave of Spades clapped the Knave of Clubs on the back, saying, cheerily—

"Bravely said, my man, and thank you for it."

"You'll be asking how he died. I'll tell you in very few words; for I'm a plain man, I am, and I don't like talking about what can't be helped. It was in Lincolnshire. A new weathercock had to be fixed on the top of a high church steeple. Jack got the job to do, and the rope broke. That's all I need tell you about it. My poor chum! He—he—"

The voice of the Knave of Clubs was a hoarse and a vulgar voice, but it had grown very sweet and tender at times during his story, and now it broke down. The ragged mountebank cried very bitterly as he thought of his dead friend. He checked his grief, saying—

"Which, after all, isn't business. I've given you a touch of my skill, and all that I've left to say is, that I hope to get a little better luck in the next town I come to; for, goodness knows, I want it bad enough!"

CHAPTER XV.—THE END OF THE GAME.

THE first grey gleam of daylight struggled through the window as the Knave of Clubs knocked the ashes from his pipe. Looking wistfully at the sky and at each other, the four men separated without a word.

Before they met again, the morning sun was high in the heavens, shedding its cheerful light upon wet path and glistening hedgerow and miry road, with a glory which brightened even that dull landscape, and might have typified that divine ray which could illumine the weary, wasted lives of those who looked back through a career of almost hopeless and despairing evil.

With a not unkindly greeting, the companions met to partake of the homely breakfast spread for them, and agreed to bear each other company to the spot where the finger-post would point to their different ways.

Setting out, not altogether hopelessly, the sound of

labouring wheels behind them caused the men to wait upon the path till they should again have a clear road. And at the turn in the lane a caravan hove in sight, pulled by a gaunt horse, driven by a man who was rosy, brisk, and cleanly shaved.

"I should know that face, I think," said the Knave of Clubs, suddenly. "That machine belongs to Branksley's circus, and that's Branksley himself as ever was, driving the old grey mare."

If it was Branksley, as no doubt it was, Branksley nearly fell off his seat when he recognized the Knave of Clubs.

"Well, this is a rum start, too," he cried, suddenly jumping down, and seizing him by the arm, "the very man as I've been looking for these three weeks. Come up here along o' me, and I'll talk to you, unless you're bound to go along with your friends here," he continued, making a comprehensive bow, which became curiously involved in a sort of half-recognition as he caught the eye of the Knave of Hearts. "Had the pleasure of seein' this gent before, I think," he added, "down at the Harmony—no offence, sir," he added, quickly, perceiving that the remark was not particularly acceptable. "Now, then, jump up."

With a shake of the hand to each of his companions, the stroller clambered to the seat in front of the caravan, and, in company with Mr. Branksley and a wiry terrier dog, drove slowly away.

The three remaining travellers reached the finger-post at the cross roads without much conversation, then stopping to look at each other with a lingering sense of pain, even in such a parting as theirs, the Knave of Hearts said—

"Well, good friends, farewell! I don't know that we've done each other any harm, and so a hand of each of you."

The old sailor had been silent, and his face wore a troubled expression, as though he had been revolving some difficulty to which he had yet found no solution. He held the thin white hand which was placed upon his own rough broad palm with an earnest grip, and his eyes filled with tears.

"Look you here, dear sir," he said at last, awkwardly but earnestly. "'I've not the birth nor the breedin' of a gentleman, it's true, but I'm an old man—old enough, mayhap, to be your father. I pray that the good God may meet with you in His own way, as He met with me years ago. You can't be offended with a rough old sailor, as has seen wonders on the great deep, an' been across the seas, an' lived up and down the world till he aint got a notion of good manners left. This is the long and short of it. I'm well-provisioned myself for a long voyage, though I don't look much like it; and you—you can't take it crossways to hear me ask you—me bein', as I said, an old rough man—that you'll share with me, as we've been messmates. A matter of a pound, now, to give me a pleasure that I haven't had for a while, of bein' some good to a man as will yet come out of the fire with God's mark upon him."

As he spoke, he left a golden coin in the white hand which trembled in his own.

The Knave of Hearts flushed, started; gazed with a long, wistful, sorrowing look into the strong, earnest, pleading face of the old man; and as he gripped that rough brown hand again, a tear, the first he had shed,

perhaps, for many weary days, fell on the coarse blue sleeve.

Neither spoke; but, as the younger man turned and strode rapidly away, he bent his head, and a long, low sob came back upon the morning air.

The sailor stood bare-headed till his figure was lost at a turn in the road, and then he and his companion went on their way.

THE END.

The Note-book.

THE Lisbon tramway case excited no little interest in the City, especially when the sick jurymen had grown well, the counsel had thrown up their briefs, and Mr. Grant, one of the defendants, was pleading his own case. It is said that the man who conducts his own case has a fool for his client; but every rule has its exceptions, and Mr. Grant showed the world that, whatever he may be commercially, he is not a fool. His remarks for the defence have staggered the barristers; for he made a far better speech than Sir Henry James, late law officer of the Crown in the Gladstone Ministry, who must have felt what the Americans call "sot on considerably."

Couldn't something be done for the benefit of unfortunate travellers by tram-car this sweltering weather? These cars are supposed to be ventilated, but it is only by a few little openings at the top, and driver and conductor object to the first door being left open, because the draught gives them colds. What is to be done? Are the public to be stewed in the tram? Are the driver and conductor to catch imaginary colds? Or are the company to make an opening at the top of the doorways, so as to cause a free passage of air? As it is, one loses pounds at every journey.

The omnibuses, too, what have we done that we should be cooked in them? They have only one door, and they have a ventilator in the front; but this is most carefully stopped up by the driver's capes, coats, wrappers, bits of harness, a spare brush, a hame or two, and a few other et ceteras. When, in despair, after mopping one's face, one asks the conductor to have the door open, he responds that it swings so that it would break his arm. Surely these doors might be taken off, and the ventilators left open. If Mr. Augustus George Church could only be forced to ride, say from Hornsey Rise to Victoria Station, inside, with eleven stout ladies, he would relent, and study the comfort of his passengers a little more.

It is never too late to learn. Here amongst Sir Salar Jung's suite is Galeb Jung, who, at the advanced age of 83 years, has undertaken the long journey from India to repay the visit of the Prince of Wales, and see the wonders of British civilization. I wonder what are his opinions on the grenadier's busby, the noise of a street cab, Trafalgar-square, the Monument, and Dr. Kenealy. A conspicuous figure amongst the Englishmen who visited Woolwich with Sir Salar Jung the other day was that of Sir Salar's friend, Colonel Hastings Frazer, a famous tiger slayer, who has been thirty years in India, and, at a time when ravages by

wild beasts were growing frequent, cleared a whole district by shooting forty-two tigers within two months. Go on and prosper, my son, and if you wish to keep your hand in while you are in England, bring your gun to my bed-room window, and you shall soon slay forty-two—a hundred and forty-two—tigers of a smaller growth, but almost as great a nuisance. I mean *Felis domesticus*—the greatest domestic cuss under the moon.

The Anti-Enclosureites have been pulling down the fences on Plumstead Common, and a gravel pit owner came before pleasant Mr. Patterson to say that the mob had broken down the fence put up to protect the public, and that now there was nothing to prevent them from falling over into the gravel pit, a distance of fifty feet. What should he do? Mr. Patterson said he had better leave matters as they are. Very wisely too; for people thick-headed enough to destroy enclosures in this mad manner could fall a good deal more than fifty feet without injury to their skulls.

At Bodenach Station, on July 8th, the Emperors of Austria and Russia bade each other a most cordial farewell. They repeatedly embraced, and the Emperor of Russia, on taking his departure, also kissed the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria. The amiable creatures! They also kissed each other three times on meeting to discuss the prospects of war. Dear wolves in the feathering of doves! Let me see—the German for kiss is *kuss*. How wonderfully that is like the American form of a malediction. Surely it is a telegraphic blunder, and they must have "cussed" each other.

Quite a little squabble occurred the other day in the House when Sir Edward Watkin called upon Sir Robert Peel to withdraw or substantiate a charge which the latter had made respecting the delivery of circulars asking for support to railway bills. Sir Robert said he had received circulars from Sir Edward Watkin, and the latter denied the soft impeachment. Both gentlemen made use of unparliamentary language, and then, at the wish of the Speaker, retracted it, as did one Midshipman Easy a certain unpleasant statement made to a marine official. At last, amidst a great deal of noise, cheers, "Ohs!" and laughter, Sir Robert twice over began a sentence with, "I have been too long in the House"—a statement that was met with derisive laughter that could not have been acceptable to the feelings of the noble baronet who represents "Tamworth tower and town."

One hears of nothing now but the Bravo inquiry. The public will gladly cry "Bravo!" when it is at an end.

WE have worn a pair of Mr. W. J. Almond's new Patent Stocking Suspenders for over a month, and shall never think of wearing garters again on any account. The stocking is kept up just as well as with a garter, perhaps better; and certainly it is more easy and comfortable, and, doctors say, much more beneficial, especially for those who suffer from varicose veins. Mr. Almond informs us that they may be had of any first-class hosiery or draper in the kingdom, or he would send them by post for 2d. extra from his address, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Price—Children's, 1s. 6d.; Young Ladies', 2s.; Ladies', 3s.

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER XXII.—REVELATIONS.

FRAMLINGHAM BROTHERS sat in his office about noon, transacting business. His cheque-book lay open on the desk before him, and he sat with both hands thrust into his trousers pockets, staring at it wistfully.

The contemplation of the blank pages did not appear to afford him particular satisfaction, for his brow was puckered, and his face grey, while his lips were pursed up in a manner that indicated desperation rather than lively satisfaction.

The truth is that Hector Framlingham was by no means happy in his mind. Trade losses had been serious. The wind of adversity had swept over those with whom he had business transactions, sweeping them away like chaff.

This claim of twenty thousand pounds in respect of the lost ship *Hannah* had come as a final blow.

Could he meet it?

He felt that it would be almost impossible, and his only hope lay in being able to prove beyond all question what Arthur Pembrose had been the first to suggest—namely, that he had been the victim of a conspiracy; that the ship had been fraudulently sent to the bottom.

There was also another ground for his depression, and the absence of that jauntiness so natural to him.

It was furnished by the state into which his daughter Ruby had fallen.

Poor Ruby! Weak, loving, gentle-hearted girl. The events of the past month had not passed over her head without producing changes visible to all, and painfully apparent to a father's dotting eyes.

She had felt "the pangs of despised love," and the excitement which had followed had failed to sustain her under the infliction.

The place of love is ill supplied by revenge. The bountiful nature of the one passion gives a charm to life, making it richer, sweeter, and more rosy. Revenge, on the other hand, is a poison that courses through the veins, giving a false stimulus to existence, but destroying while it seems to satisfy.

Such a nature as that of Ruby Framlingham pined for love, and found nothing to sustain it in the revengeful thoughts she entertained as a duty.

Hence she drooped and faded.

A hectic flush burned in her cheek, her eyes grew dim, and she moved about the house silent and abstracted, the shadow of her former self.

As he looked at her, the father's heart ached with apprehension. She was the treasure of his life. All he did, all he sought to acquire, every speculation and venture, had for its sole object her happiness. His widowed heart clung to her in its loneliness, and made her its idol, the object of its truest love and sincerest devotion.

Imagine his dismay, then, when he saw her fading before his eyes, like a flower that no cherishing can save.

Conceive also his bitter indignation against the man who had so ruthlessly made her his victim, playing with

her heart awhile, then casting her aside in favour of another.

Thoughts of these things chased like swift clouds through his mind, as he sat reflecting that morning, the winter sunshine brightening all the room, yet having no power to give warmth or cheerfulness to the central figure in it.

In the midst of these moody ponderings, he was disturbed by the announcement of a visitor, and, to his surprise, Edgar Homersham Knowles presented himself. They had not met since the night of the party, Framlingham naturally feeling disinclined to keep up a familiarity which could only give his daughter pain, and be a source of constant irritation.

And now the greeting he accorded his visitor was freezing in its coldness.

"You are no doubt surprised, Framlingham, that I did not see you before. I ought to have done so."

In these frank terms Edgar Knowles sought to make his peace. Framlingham felt the effect, and extended his hand.

"Glad to see you," he said, gruffly.

"Thanks," returned Knowles, quietly; "and now to business. And first, as to what has estranged us of late. No one can regret more than I do that I did not come to you at once, when I found that the man who had paid some attentions to your daughter had made mine an offer of his hand. Will you believe me when I say that had I known how seriously he had devoted himself to Ruby, I should have done so? but it is only of late that I have learned the truth in this matter. I apologize to you."

They shook hands.

"And now," Knowles continued, "I am not about to ask you for your congratulations, but for your sympathy. I am assured that there is every reason to suppose that this fellow, Harcourt, who has thrust himself into our circle, and disturbed the peace of both our children, is a mere adventurer."

"Worse than an adventurer," was the answer.

"So I have come to fear; but I am indifferently informed on the matter. The truth is, my sister Effra has in some mysterious way fathomed this mystery, and it is at her instigation that I come to you, and ask you to do what you can to help me to save my child. For if what I hear is true, she must be saved at any cost."

Framlingham touched a bell on his desk, and Arthur Pembrose entered the office. He was pale and nervous, but a bright light gleamed in his eyes.

"Tell Mr. Knowles all that we know or suspect of Edmund Harcourt," said his employer.

Arthur complied. He stated his grounds for believing that Edmund Harcourt was no other than Hilton Gathorne, the consul against whom a warrant was issued nearly five years before, on a charge of having insured an imaginary ship (the *Khedive*), in order to defraud a company out of the insurance money. He showed that Harcourt was the friend of Captain Pagnell, now in custody for having attempted to defraud the Brothers Framlingham of twenty thousand pounds on another ship, the *Hannah*, which was believed to have been scuttled, and so to have gone down with an utterly worthless cargo.

The grounds for his convictions on this point, Arthur stated at length.

"My great difficulty," he said, "was to connect Harcourt with the Pagnell gang, who were engaged in this business; and that is still the weak point in our case, though we have attempted to arrest Harcourt as well as Pagnell—the man who had the audacity to demand the insurance money. Our proofs were simply these: We knew that the Pagnell gang frequented an old house by the river-side, Wapping; and to the door of that house I myself watched Harcourt, and saw him enter. But there is one weak point in our endeavour to criminate this man Harcourt. It is this. We are on the verge of identifying him with the conspirators; but cannot wholly succeed in doing so. Thus, when I found him at Captain Pagnell's chambers, I feared to authorize his arrest. I found him there, and that, in conjunction with what had been ascertained, gave a colourable pretext for taking that course; but I am bound to confess that I have no means of supplying the wanting link which would lead to his conviction with a dead certainty."

"I fancy," said Edgar Knowles, "that my sister Effra will be able to help you in this matter."

"That would be fortunate," was the answer; "but I am not altogether in despair yet. I have still a resource. I have laid a trap into which I have every belief that he will fall. Meanwhile—"

They were interrupted by the entrance of the clerk with a telegraphic message.

Framlingham Brothers opened it apathetically; but warmed into sudden interest as he read.

"From my lawyer," he said. "I will read—"

"The man Pagnell, charged with the fraudulent wreck of the *Hannah*, has died in the night, of apoplexy."

The men stood for a moment, each gazing at the other, each attempting to realize the effect of this communication.

"Poor wretch!" Framlingham remarked; "but his death saves us. He was the only claimant, and with him the claim dies. The others will hardly dare to come forward."

"I fear not," said Arthur.

"Fear not?"

"Exactly; for should there be an end to the claim, we shall have no grounds on which to hunt down and expose Harcourt's villanies. Fate itself seems to favour him in slipping out of the consequences of his misdeeds."

"Yes," said Edgar Knowles, bitterly; "but the end has not yet come. However, I thank you for what you have revealed respecting him—quite enough to warrant me in forbidding him any longer to aspire to my daughter's hand. I am satisfied, though the law might be more difficult to convince."

And he left, fully convinced that there was now practically an end to Edmund Harcourt. He did not know that the man he hoped so quietly to thrust from his path bore a charmed life.

CHAPTER XXIII.—BEAUTY'S PERILS.

THAT superb creature, Mrs. Dormer-Paget, was true to her promise to Marco. She acted the part of a mother—an intensely worldly mother—to the beautiful Zerina, who soon became the light of her strange circle.

Even the queer people who did not believe in youth and affected to despise beauty, the women with purple cheeks and bloodshot eyes, and the men with bull necks and thick lips, got to admire her.

They treated her as a pet. She was in the midst of them, with her rippling gold hair, and rosy face, and innocent laughter, what a bird might have been, or a little trick-poodle, or any other object to be admired, fondled, and made a source of amusement.

She did not like these strange people.

That she admitted.

But then they were very kind to her in their way; would have initiated her into all the mysteries of betting; posted her up in the pedigrees of every horse on the turf; taught her cards, billiards, even skittles, had she chosen; given her secret "tips" about the fights to come off, the rats to be killed, the badgers to be drawn, and the fifty other matters which occupied all their thoughts, and made up the sum of their conversation. Unfortunately she had no natural taste for these things; but feeling bound to interest herself in what interested those who were so kind to her, she listened patiently to all they said, and tried to remember what they wished her to remember. And one thing she was specially successful in: she delighted them with her facility for acquiring slang, and the efforts she made to acquire a taste for strong drinks were pronounced highly creditable to her.

It was a coarse, bad school—that she felt; and feeling it, wondered what could have prompted her father, who had nurtured her so carefully, to have brought her in contact with it. But since he had done so, she supposed it was to serve some loving purpose—for her confidence in his fatherly affection nothing could shake; and she therefore felt it her duty to hide her fears, and to enter with what zest she could on this new and strange career.

And those who saw what she was, who were conscious of the contrast between her youth and innocence and their terrible surroundings, did they not wonder also at Marco's object in this his treatment of his child?

Listen.

It is at the opera. The house is filled to witness the first representation of a new work. The Dormer-Paget box is as usual crowded. From the front it looks a mass of semi-nude forms, such as Rubens loved to paint, mingling busts of brawny women, their heads adorned with huge rolls of hair and massive wreaths, their necks and arms glittering with jewels, real and false, in a strange jumble; but all big, imposing, and vulgar. In the midst shines the sweet face of Zerina—pure and soft—framed in the sunny locks that hang about it, a simple rose their only adornment.

People, sweeping the house with their opera glasses, can hardly miss the Dormer-Paget box.

And the inevitable result is a smile and a remark.

The Dormer-Pagets are known to everybody as the type of a special sort of fast life—a life led by thousands of our countrymen and women, which dazzles by its vulgar splendour, and repels by its obtrusive coarseness.

Among others, two in a distant box, two frequenters of the Dormer-Paget halls, discuss the question of the advent of Marco's daughter into this life.

And thus run their comments:—

"Is this Marco fool or knave?"

"Knave."

"Does he, then, know these people?"

"Perfectly."

"Understands what sort of circle it is he is bringing that sweet girl into, with all her delicacy and purity?"

"He knows."

"But, hang it, man!—they say he has reared her up innocent as a child—pure as an angel?"

"Quite true."

"Nay, but with what object? Why should he do so, if, at her dangerous age, he throws her wilfully among such a set?"

The man questioned smiles a horrible smile.

"Can't you guess his object?" he asks, turning questioner in his turn.

"Well, hardly."

"Ah! You don't understand the charm innocence has for depravity, and purity for grossness. Why, man, Marco is a genius in his knowledge of life. He has catered superbly for his market."

"Market!"

"Certainly. Can you doubt it? What should such a man do with such a treasure?"

"Do with her?"

"Pshaw, man! Are you an idiot, that you keep echoing a fellow with that rabbit mouth of yours? I repeat, what should he do with her? What can he do but part with her to the highest bidder in market overt—sell her, in fact, if not by public auction, why, then by private contract?"

A laugh, a shrugging of shoulders, and the speakers turn their attention from the noisy Dormer-Paget box to note the other attractions of the house.

A conversation like this will serve to show that men of the world quite understood Marco's position and intentions, and did not regard him, in consequence, with any particular aversion. The truth is, that the higher classes take this market view of affairs so much in all that affects their daughters, that it inspired no particular surprise that Marco should follow their example. The only difference is that match-making mammas do not talk of selling their darlings; they use the term "securing them a position." It means the same thing, only does not sound quite so coarse. But in Marco's case there was no occasion to be particular.

On the night at the opera alluded to, the Dormer-Paget box was more sought after, and more noisily demonstrative than usual. Nobody except Zerina cared for the music. Those who crowded in talked loudly and laughed heartily. People in other boxes cried "Hush!" and "Shame!" but they did not know what the hush of quiet meant, and as for shame, they knew and felt none. All the night, refreshments were being consumed; champagne lent its accustomed zest. Brandy, adroitly plied, gave its aid where all else failed. Drinking, laughing, snoring, and betting—for bets can be booked in churches, for that matter—whiled away the hours. Music filled up the intervals. And under this arrangement all agreed that it was a charming night.

Zerina was charmed with the exquisite strains which fed her ears with their beauty. Music such as this she had never heard—never dreamed of. If the tiresome people about her would only have left her to the quiet enjoyment of it, she would have been perfectly happy.

But they seemed to have no other notion than that

of availing themselves of the music, as something under the cover of which they could joke freely and laugh heartily.

Moreover, there was another source of uneasiness to Zerina.

Both on the way to the opera house, and several times after their arrival, Mrs. Dormer-Paget had made significant allusions to "the colonel"—sometimes wondering why he was so late, sometimes expressing apprehensions lest he should not arrive at all.

And in all these allusions it was clear that she had an eye to Zerina, and that there was a hidden significance in them which boded her no good.

At least, so the fair girl felt convinced.

There was something in the manner of Mrs. Dormer-Paget which gave peculiar emphasis to her lightest words. This superb woman had so grand a presence that it invested trifles with importance. When she moved, all eyes were upon her. When she spoke, the loudest and noisiest instinctively hushed, and listened to her. A magnetic influence seemed half the source, and gave more than half the effect of her resplendent charms.

Zerina was specially conscious of this. In the presence of the woman who had adopted her, so far as bringing her out in the world was concerned, she felt always a sense of fascination, not unmixed with uneasiness. It was the feeling of the dove when it comes within range of the eyes of the basilisk. Not a wholly painful feeling; hardly one of terror; rather a sense of pleasure, trembling on the verge of pain, of danger tempered by the brightness and perfume of the flowers growing on the verge of the inevitable precipice.

So it happened that this night each renewed allusion to "the colonel," so anxiously expected, jarred more and more on the pleasure of the scene.

There was no reason why Zerina should have been specially impressed in this way.

She had no cause, so far as she knew, to fear the advent of this mysterious personage.

Not a word had been said to her, in order to lead her to suppose that his presence was likely to affect her in any special manner; yet, unconsciously and quite involuntarily, she felt a shudder of aversion, or a consciousness of dislike, creep over her at each recurring allusion to him.

It was strange.

Yes; but in the whole range of the wonders of human consciousness, there is nothing more strange than the laws of affinity and repugnance. Why do we love, and why do we hate? What is it that inclines us at first sight to take to our hearts some whom we meet, while we shrink with invincible repugnance from others? It is not always beauty which inspires regard. The least richly endowed with personal charms are often the most fascinating; while some forms of beauty inspire general repugnance. It may be said that we are now speaking of the effects produced from the meeting of individuals, and Zerina and this unknown, whom she so disliked, had never met. True; but since we cannot account for the law of attraction and repulsion, who shall venture to assert that it has not a wider range than is imagined, and that pure and delicate natures have not a prescience of what is about to befall them; of the threatened approach of those with whom they have no sympathy, and whose mere coming affects

them as the distant cloud moves the flower to close its blossoms in mere anticipation of impending gloom?

In the midst of one of the most delicious solos of the opera, Zerina was abruptly startled out of the dream of bliss by an exclamation from the lips of Mrs. Dormer-Paget.

"The colonel!" she cried.

Heedless of the music, of the rapt attention of the house, it seemed as if she could not restrain the impulse thus to give expression to her feelings. Indeed, she was a lady not much accustomed to self-restraint, that not being a characteristic of any of those moving in her circle.

Looking round as she heard the words, with a sense of apprehension greater than anything that had yet inspired her, Zerina saw a figure standing in the doorway of the box, with lifted hat, bowing to the ladies.

There was nothing repulsive in his appearance.

He was simply a gentleman of some fifty summers, as neat and trim, as cleanly shaven, and faultlessly clothed as elderly gentlemen could well be. His face was of a perfectly aristocratic type; his hair just beginning to change; his grey eyes bright and sharp as rapiers; his teeth white beyond the whiteness of teeth, yet nevertheless real, every one of them, as he seemed to take a pride in showing by an occasional snap, that was possibly quite harmless, but had an unpleasant suggestive sound, like the closing of crocodiles' jaws in the silence of Egyptian nights. A pleasant smile played over the smoothly shaven face, lit up the grey eyes, and was lost among the network of fine wrinkles in connection with them. Glossier black was never worn than that the colonel wore; his linen was of the purest, his gloves perfection, his boots miracles of diminutiveness. A most gentlemanly man this; with a manner that ingratiated, and a voice that was a delight to listen to.

As Zerina was introduced, she wondered why she had shrunk from the idea of meeting him. She wondered, too, why her hand trembled as he held it in his, a second—just a second or so—longer than there was any occasion for.

He asked her how she did, in a silken tone.

While she answered, he bent over her with a manner that was fatherly and reassuring, and regarded her with an obvious admiration, tempered by respect.

"You are partial to the opera?" he asked, with a sweet, soft tone.

Mrs. Dormer-Paget broke in, all fire and ardour—

"The dear child dotes on it," she said—"quite a mania for music."

"Ah!"

He gave the exclamation with a zest, as if he tasted it on his palate, and enjoyed it.

"He was not aware," he said, "that his dear old friends had in their circle any one so young and—he must add, he really must—so charming."

Zerina crimsoned.

She was not used to compliments, and somehow a compliment from the colonel was not agreeable to her. She tried to smile, and turned away, resolved to listen to the music and enjoy it as before.

But she could no longer listen—she could no longer enjoy.

The presence of the colonel brought with it a new influence. He was—not in high spirits, because a man of his well-regulated temperament is not affected by that sort of thing; rather, let us say, in high polish that night. He talked, and talked well. His little anecdotes were told with a neatness quite his own. There was not much in them, but they were so told that they went off in little snaps, as if at the point of each he had released a trigger.

But somehow, though all the tales, all the jokes, all the flashes of wit were thus bright and polished, they were just adapted to tickle the ears of the coarse people who listened to them. They laughed as they would not have done at coarser things. They even tried to retort in the colonel's manner, and failed utterly. The tone was above them, and they had not the cleverness to see that the matter was below them—aye, even below the coarsest and most animal of them all.

Some dim sense of this—of the fact that polish of manner does not necessarily mean cleanness of mind—perhaps influenced the mind of the innocent girl as she listened, half understandingly, to what fell from the colonel's lips.

And listening, she liked him less than at first, yet felt herself feverishly alive to all he said and did. His presence was more to her than that of all the rest, and, caring less for it, she could not get it out of her mind.

At length the act-drop fell.

The third act was over. There was a general movement. The ladies retired to the saloon. Zerina was about to follow, when the colonel detained her with a touch of his gloved hand.

"No, my child," he said, in his soft, fatherly way—"they are gone to drink. Drink is poison at your age. It will rob your eyes of their fire—your cheek of its bloom. Stay with me; let us talk."

So kind, so tender, so paternal! As he sat at her side she felt that he was more fatherly even than Marco. Bit by bit she overcame her fears and her reserve. He drew her out, and soon she was smiling and chatting as if they had been old friends.

But there was this strange peculiarity. Once when he quitted her side for a few moments—called away by some one of the party—all her repugnance returned.

She prayed that he might not return.

And when he came she forgot all but that he was delightful.

This personal fascination, too, grew as time went on; and when the night was done, and he proposed to see her to the carriage, she readily assented.

They had descended the grand staircase of the opera house, the rest of the party in advance; when, as they neared the doors, where there was a little crowd, some one carelessly stepped on to the train of Zerina's long dress, and so staggered against her.

She put up her arm to ward the fellow off; but not before she felt hot breath on her neck, and a few hasty words were breathed in her ear.

The words were these—

"Beware the Devil!"

Terrified, she raised eagerly inquiring eyes toward the stranger; and, as he beat a hasty retreat, his face was for an instant turned upon her. It was that of Randolph Agnew!

Modern Martyrdoms.

A NOT very popular member of Parliament declared Turkey in Europe to be an anachronism, and that it must fall. So far from its being permitted to go down during the war that is being carried on against it by the Christian peoples who, goaded to desperation, have now risen in arms, it is probable that England would take its part and become an ally. Let us see, then, what is the character of the Government we should be called upon to support.

Firstly, let it be premised that what follows in this article has nothing whatever to do with Ashantee, Dahomey, or other savage places; but that the scenes occurred in the nineteenth century, in Christian Europe, within a few days' railway journey of England, though for hideous savage brutality and sheer horror nothing worse took place in the darkest of the dark ages.

Some little time since, within the last month or two, the inhabitants of Bulgaria, the beautiful fertile province on the south bank of the lower Danube, were guilty of some insurrectionary movement against the Turkish Government, and to pacify the province, Hussein Avni, now gone to his account, let loose upon them the Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians, the irregular troops of the Turkish army. How these fiends behaved towards the Christian people after the slight insurrection was quelled, let the following extracts, supplied to a leading journal from the spot, tell for themselves. The Constantinople papers knew of all these matters, but dared not publish them. One paper, the *Courrier*, was suspended for giving some account of the atrocities, to the great offence of the Turkish Government. This was what it described—facts that could not be contradicted:—

The village of Novo Selo was attacked by Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians. More than four hundred women and children took to flight, and, worn out with fatigue, huddled themselves together in the open fields near Kalofer. They sent to the head men of the latter village for food. After some negotiations to obtain the permission of the neighbouring Mussulmen, they received permission to take refuge in the Convent of the Holy Trinity. During the negotiations a band of two hundred men burst in upon the poor wretches, took from them everything of value which the Circassian troops had left them, and carried off forty of the young women. These men, returning to their village with their captives, were met by the Turkish women, who objected to receive any Giaours. They were thereupon driven to a neighbouring farm, and, after a scene which the *Courrier* describes but an English paper dare not, they were shut up in a straw loft and burnt.

Great numbers of Bulgarian children have been captured by the Circassians, and have been sold or are now on sale as slaves. So large is the stock on hand, that young girls may be bought for three or four liras each at Philippopolis. The estimate of those killed—non-combatants, that is—is fixed at 12,000, including men, women, and children. The country is full of armed marauders, who compel all the wealthy Christians to pay heavy penalties, under the threat of being denounced as insurgents. The men and women are afraid to go to the fields, and the harvest is thus being lost.

It is true that at Avrat-alan some sixty Turks were murdered by the insurgents; but no case has been

proved of a Turkish woman or child having been put to death by the Bulgarians, at least in the district of Philippopolis.

Here is another extract from a letter written within the past few weeks:—

"The devastation of the province of Philippopolis is still going on. The flames which have encircled us since the breaking out of these troubles are assuming still greater proportions. Every Bulgarian feels that his life is in peril, and awaits his death from minute to minute. The Turks are extremely enraged, and the massacres continue. Thousands of innocent people are awaiting a bitter death in the prisons. The Bulgarians seized in the towns and villages by the troops and Bashi-Bazouks, or by individual Turks, whether guilty or not, are being brought half dead, and subjected to indescribable tortures and sufferings, under which very many of them are dying. The prisons, warehouses, baths, and khans (inns) of the city are full of these unfortunate people. On the 3rd inst. (June) 450 prisoners were brought here from Tatar-Bazardjik. Their arrival caused such a horrible scene as to throw the whole city into consternation. These prisoners had been arrested in different parts of the district of Tatar-Bazardjik, and sent to Philippopolis to undergo their trial for their complicity in the recent troubles. They were bound with chains, handcuffs, and ropes, and were escorted by 200 soldiers. The populace, prompted some by compassion, and others by curiosity or fanaticism, came out to see their entry into the city. As the sad procession approached, cries and groans were heard from a long distance off. When they reached the bridge near the Government House, I witnessed a most horrible spectacle. A mob of Turks, armed some with stones and others with clubs, fell upon and began to beat and maim the poor manacled prisoners.

"The arrests are assuming daily greater dimensions. The officers and directors of the two Financial (Savings) Associations remain in prison without trial. Although the rules and accounts of these associations have been published, and have been presented to the Government in Constantinople for approval, yet the authorities here are not satisfied with arresting simply the directors, but are proceeding also to arrest all the depositors, among whom are found many of our most respectable, quiet, and industrious citizens. Priests are being brought in every day from the villages. The horrors and barbarities in the prisons still continue. The people of the town are not permitted to carry bread or water even to their own relatives shut up in loathsome dungeons. Many are dying for want of food and air. Some of our most wealthy citizens are confined in cells along with Turkish murderers."

It is impossible to narrate the greater horrors that have taken place; these are but the minor outrages.

Here is an extract from a letter dated Philippopolis, June 9, 1876:—

"When the news reached us of the accession of his Imperial Majesty Sultan Murad V., all rejoiced in the hope that orders would at once be given for the better treatment of the accused now imprisoned in this city, and for the establishment of peace and protection in the province; but matters have since then grown worse instead of better."

The following are extracts from Sliven, written at the end of May:—

"This is what is now happening outside our city. The great multitude of Bashi-Bazouks, composed of Turks, Circassians, and gipsies, who flocked here at the arrival of his Excellency Shevket Pacha, are committing various depredations in the villages, carrying off sheep, cattle, horses, furniture, and robbing the people of their money. Some of the poor villagers, in order to defend themselves and their property, had the courage to resist the plunderers; but this brought on their heads worse and more bitter calamities. The accusations of the extortioners succeeded in making Shevket Pacha suspect the peasants as insurgents. Among the number of these unfortunate peasants are the inhabitants of Boyadjik (a village in our province eight hours' distant from Sliven), those of Bash-Tepéh (a village in the province of Em-Zaghra, five hours' distant on the south of that city), and of six other Bulgarian villages near there. These innocent peasants having thus been represented to Shevket Pacha, he ordered on the 16th (28th) instant the Caimakam of Yamboli to go and investigate the matter. The Turks say that he found the peasants under arms, and that they refused to let him come into their village, stating that they had no confidence in him, and that they would surrender their arms only to the regular troops. On his return to Yamboli, the Caimakam during the night telegraphed to Shevket Pacha, representing the peasants as insurgents, and also that the inhabitants of many other villages had collected in Boyadjik. At midnight Shevkat Pacha started from here with regular troops and Bashi-Bazouks, and determined upon the destruction of Boyadjik. As they say, first he fired seven cannons, and then left the Bashi-Bazouks and the troops to enter it. The village was completely burned to ashes. It is said that few of the women and children were killed, few of the men were left, while the Turks had not a single one killed. See what sort of insurgents were the peasants of Boyadjik. This tragic event occurred on Monday, the 17th (29th) instant, and in the evening of the same day Shevket Pacha returned to Yamboli. On Wednesday the 19th (31st) it was rumoured that Shevket Pacha started for the village of Bash-Tepéh, with his troops and Bashi-Bazouks. His Holiness the Bishop of Sliven hastened to propose to the Mutessarif (Civil Governor) of Sliven that before the destruction of these villages an investigation should be made, to ascertain whether their inhabitants were really insurgents. The Mutessarif, deeply moved at the fate of Boyadjik, expressed his regret for what had happened, and, giving a letter of recommendation to the Bishop for Shevket Pacha, he told him to go himself and hold an investigation about the state of things in these villages. Accompanied by a corporal, Mehmed Aga, and eight zaptiehs, the Bishop overtook Shevket Pacha in the village of Karadja Mouratti. Here he found also a certain Bey from Fundukley, who, hearing the mission of the Bishop, began to accuse him of having misrepresented the matter to the Mutessarif, and of having dared to meddle with military matters—something, as he said, inconsistent with his duty and office. Then the Pacha took out and read to the Bishop a telegram from Serdari-Ekrein—Abdul Kerim Pacha—in which it said:— 'As it has been found on inquiry that the inhabitants

of these seven villages are insurgents, you are commanded to destroy them.' Therefore the Pacha told the Bishop that he must fulfil the order. Hereupon the above-mentioned Bey went out of the room, and soon after two Turks, pretending to be in great terror, came in, and loudly informed the Pacha that the Bulgarians had destroyed their villages. The Pacha, looking angrily at the Bishop, asked him, 'Do you see what your peaceful Bulgarians do?' The Bishop told him that he could not believe the report of these two men. Falling on his knees, he begged the Pacha not to destroy the villages; but to allow him to go and hold an inquiry himself. The Pacha complied with his request, and the Bishop, accompanied by the Caimakam of Em-Zaghra, started for the insurgent villages. On their arrival there, they found no insurgents, but a host of plunderers, who were driving and carrying off the cattle and furniture of the poor peasants.

"In the market the soldiers attacked Detcho, the sailor, while the redifs fired upon him and killed him. The same band of soldiers killed with their daggers a boy sixteen years old, and mortally wounded Thodoraki Ahmakoff. Four men are lying in bed badly wounded, but those who are slightly wounded are without number. The Governor in this case showed a great deal of prudence and energy. The moment he was informed of these troubles, he hastened to the place, ordered that the corpses of the two killed should be taken away, pacified the people, accompanied himself some of the wealthier people to their houses, while others he sent accompanied by his men, and commanded the Bashi-Bazouks to lay down their arms. In spite of all these orders, however, the Bashi-Bazouks did not lay down their arms, and continued to walk about armed; so that the people, fearing lest their property should be sacked, did not open their shops. The Governor, observing this, ordered on the 13th (25th) the public criers to announce to the people to open their shops, but they opened only one door of their shops, being still afraid of the lawlessness of the Bashi-Bazouks. A short time after, the Bashi-Bazouks and the troops attacked the butchers' and bakers' shops, plundering all the meat, bread, and money they found, so that the shops were again closed. The Governor again ordered the Bashi-Bazouks to lay down their arms, and the Turkish Muhtars and Imams to tell the Turks to attend to their business. Moreover, he appointed guards of soldiers to go around the city, and by these precautions tranquillity was established again. In the villages, however, the Bashi-Bazouks go about freely with their arms, and commit various outrages, so that no one dares to go out of the city."

This last extract is dated June 9th:—

"There is hardly a man left in the village. Those who were not killed were sent as prisoners to Philippopolis, under the pretext that they are committees (members of the revolutionary committee). The soldiers are quartered upon the inhabitants, and they do with them what they like. Everything valuable has been stolen, and the poor people are dying of hunger. One mother killed her children on this account, and then herself. These cruelties are committed by the regular troops as well as by the Bashi-Bazouks."

This, then, is the state of affairs in one of the Turkish provinces; and the reader must once more be warned that what is set down here does not in any way express

the horrors of some of the atrocities committed. Is it then, to be wondered at, that the Christian peoples—Servians, Bosnians, and the like—should rise in revolt, saying it is better to die in a bold stroke for liberty than to sit meekly down and witness such cruelties around? We have heard plenty about the misrule of Turkey, and the proceedings of its courts; but such horrors as these are not often unveiled. No matter what takes place there now, it seems impossible that English feeling can ever again be on the side of a country which has put the most savage nations to the blush, and that in the year 1876, when war is supposed to have been civilized. To many such statements may seem almost impossible; unfortunately, they are too well verified by an amplitude of reports.

Full Many a Gem.

THE "barbaric pearl" is not so exclusively a product of the Orient as the poets would have us to imagine. The naturalist has another tale to tell. Pearls are found in the fresh-water mussels (*Unio margaritifera*) of almost every European river, and notably in those of Scotland. In the Middle Ages, Caledonian pearls were held in high esteem, and some are even said to be in the Scottish crown, which so many of our readers may have peeped at through the bars of the cage in which it is contained in that dark little room in Edinburgh Castle.

A few years ago the trade was revived, and with much success. The Queen and the ex-Emperor of the French bought numbers of them, and, as a consequence, Scottish pearls became almost as popular in the modern fashionable world as they were in ancient times among the patrician ladies of Rome.

The fishing is very primitive in its *modus operandi*, and in the Tay, Doon, Don, Teith, Forth, Ythan, Spey, Ugie, and Earn, old men, women, and children may be seen wading about the shallow fords, searching for the mussels which may perchance contain the precious ornaments. When the waders discover a collection of mussels, they thrust long sticks, split at the ends, among the shells, and bring them up wedged in the slots. But it would appear from the newspaper reports that pearl fishing in Scotland is likely to be done to death.

For some years it has been prosecuted in the shallow waters of the Dee, in Kirkcudbrightshire, by a few industrious adventurers; but of late the fishings have become exhausted, and all the ingenuity of the pearl seekers has had to be called into play in searching the lochs and deep pools in the river courses. During the last three years tongs have been used with fair success, and the parts thus reached have been thoroughly fished.

Within the last few weeks a boat has been used in the loch. Beginning at the lee side, the boat is allowed to drift, the fisher leaning over, with his head literally in the water, but protected by a tin box, through the plate-glass bottom of which he scans the bottom of the lake, perhaps thirty feet below, but to his eyes not more than a tenth of that distance. On a series of poles—jointed after the fashion of a sweep's broom—is a landing net, with a steel scoop, into which the fisher sweeps every shell that comes within his gaze.

In this way, and with much industry, a large number of pearls have been obtained, many of them of considerable value; but in another season or two the whole will be exhausted, and pearl mussels in the Cree and Dee will become almost as much a thing of the past as oysters are likely soon to be in the neighbouring seas.

In Wales and in the North of Ireland a fresh-water pearl fishery is also kept up on a small scale. But from these districts, as well as from Bavaria and from Bohemia, where the industry is also carried on, the same tale of "over-fishing" comes to us.

Like the Philadelphians, they will insist on killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

To Betsey Jane.

AN ODE.

O H, Betsey Jane! Oh, Betsey Jane!
You gave me, maiden, grief and pain—
Not through love's arrow—
For I ne'er worshipped thee, though fair:
Thy freckled face, thy deep-red hair,
And forehead narrow.

The pain was for the babe, who laughed,
Though placed in such a thorough draught—
Next day 't was sneezing;
And then the sheets, for want of airing,
Made little Tom—the household scaring—
Have croup and wheezing.

You know, too, how, a little later,
You upset that perambulator—
One made to double;
Cut Sally's eye; poor little Rose
Had fits, and bleeding from the nose,
And endless trouble.

Then, that hot-water can you placed
Upon the stairs, which I, in haste,
Slipped o'er, and tumbled.
You left the front door open late,
You let the horse fall on the grate,
Yet said we grumbled.

And that night when we had our friends,
Who was it but our Betsey sends,
Tom with his knicker-
Bockers bulgy, put on wrongly,
Although he remonstrated strongly,
And tried to kick her.

You know how Tit you tried to throttle
With gristle, and made baby's bottle
Of food quite boiling;
And snubbed each little cherub's will—
At least, those that you did not kill—
Its temper spoiling.

You made their ears, with towels, rare;
And with a comb jiggled out their hair,
Quite by the roots.
You made the house resound with cries,
By letting soap get in their eyes—
Of all the brutes!

Boxed this one's ears, called that a glutton.
Clothes without strings, and ne'er a button;

And as for sox—
We're blessed since, with the wage you earned,
You took a day and ne'er returned,
But sent a man, who'd come, we learned,
To fetch your box.

Wanderings in Half-a-Guinea.

BY MAJOR MONK-LAUSEN.

CHAPTER I.—THE VOYAGE OUT.

AND looking down, I saw the most appalling sight imaginable.

An enormous serpent had—

But, stop, I must tell you how it was.

So be it, then, if Fate wills it. The hand which has for so long grasped the rifle must school itself to do the work of a scribe; the fingers and the thumb which erst stifled the last expiring sob in the throat of the Oronoko grizzly must learn to guide the goosequill; the eyes so long wont to scan the boundless horizon and pierce the empyrean must be bent for hour after hour upon sheets of foolscap. Let the restless limbs repose awhile; let the iron muscles relax; let the active brain cease from plotting and planning, and indulge the reverie of memory.

Yet—shall I confess it?—I, who never yet quailed before man, bird, beast, or reptile—I, who have stemmed the torrent, shot the cataract, explored the volcano, dodged the avalanche without a moment's quickening of the pulse—shrink somewhat from my task.

It is not that I am diffident about my literary qualifications; had I but to write a history, a philosophical treatise, or an epic poem, I should address myself with confidence to the work. But when I am called upon to relate my travels and adventures, two obstacles rise before me.

The first is an innate modesty and abhorrence of egotism. I shall have constantly to speak of myself, and relate my own achievements; and that, though it may delight my readers, will be a source of great pain to myself. My second difficulty arises from my love of veracity, and a morbid dread of being suspected of exaggeration. However, the modern traveller has one advantage over Herodotus and Bruce; the means of locomotion are now so easy, that any portion of the globe we inhabit is readily accessible, and the obvious answer to a sceptic is—

"Here you have the latitude and longitude, go and see whether what I state is true or not for yourself."

At any rate, the arguments which have been brought forward to induce me to write these pages are such that it is out of the question to resist them; so I address myself resolutely to the task, merely premising that as I took no notes, and have to trust entirely to memory, I will not deny that a few unimportant inaccuracies may possibly creep into the text.

From early manhood I have ever been a wanderer. Though naturally of a domestic disposition, the cares of a family prove intolerably burdensome and wearisome to me, and I have always had a predilection for sojourning where Nature holds her wild sway, and the tyrannical social laws of civilized man are not known.

I had spent the winter of 187— in Algeria, to which

colony the account given by Jules Gerard of the lion shooting had attracted me. The sport was not bad, and I should probably have had another season among the long manes, had it not been for a disagreeable little matter which occurred soon after my return to Algiers to refit. A fair Kabyle who had attracted the admiration of a French general, unfortunately showed a preference for the undecorated English traveller.

A challenge was the result; and though I share the sentiments of my countrymen with respect to the absurdity of duelling, I felt that I was bound to conform to the habits and customs of the people amongst whom I was residing at the time. To endeavour to convince a French soldier that you were actuated by any worthy sentiments in refusing to measure swords with him would indeed be a hopeless task. He would simply regard you as a debased and cowardly wretch, devoid of all sense of honour.

So I met the general, and had the misfortune to run him through the body; it was a sad necessity, for he had shown me considerable kindness before the dark eyes of Zarifa excited ill-feeling between us; but—

"Quand une dame est dans le cas
Il faut que toutes autres choses donnent place,"

as I remarked to the seconds while wiping my rapier.

The general having been considered one of the finest swordsmen in the service, his conquest excited much speculation and discussion, and every *maitre d'armes* in the garrison felt an uneasy desire to measure weapons with the victor. Thus quarrels were forced upon me in a very unpleasant manner, though I did my best to avoid them. I disabled three of these regimental fencing masters; but a thrust through the neck in the last encounter reminded me of the proverb about the pitcher that goes to the well once too often, and I was anxious to quit a country which had become the reverse of hospitable.

An opportunity soon occurred. A Spanish ship bound for Melbourne, Australia, direct—*direct* meaning, of course, round by the Cape of Good Hope—received me, my luggage, and my battery of guns and rifles. I had always intended to have a campaign against the larger game of Half-a-Guinea, to which I imagined I could easily find transport from an Australian port; and whether it was entered upon one year or the next mattered little—the present opportunity was as good as any other.

Indeed, it was a fortunate one; for the moderate sum charged for the passage suited well with my financial affairs, which were somewhat at a low ebb; while the long sea voyage promised to do that for my health which I felt was much needed. Those who have never tried the experiment can hardly imagine the discomfort caused by a triangular weapon passing through the nerves and muscles of the neck. Really if Frenchmen will fence with unbaited weapons on every slight pretext, they ought to choose flat sword blades to play with; then a wound which was not mortal would have a fair chance of healing. Besides, I had not been leading a very healthy life of late; a period of great fatigue and privation had been followed by a short burst of rough military jollity, and absinthe never did agree with me.

So that my wound had an impaired constitution to work on; and though, while arrangements had to be

made and something to be done, I bore up, directly I was at rest, and had time to be ill, fever prostrated me. I just remember passing the Straits of Gibraltar, and thinking how strange it was to take a southerly course afterwards; and then all is a blank till we reached Madeira, except the extreme discomfort of my bunk, which had been rudely put together, and was so cramped that when I started up suddenly I barked my nose against the rough planks above me.

I was nursed through my illness by my only fellow-passenger, if a supercargo ought to be reckoned such. Peter Tromp was his name, and he was as unlike the conventional Dutchman as you can well imagine. He was tall, thin, and had a bald head, as white and smooth as a billiard ball. He had been in every country, had a smattering of every language, and knew a little of every trade and profession.

Amongst other things, he was a bit of a doctor, and so he undertook my cure; and as he had no medicines, and did not attempt to bleed me, but trusted entirely to nursing and feeding, I may say that he saved my life. For the skipper was about the meanest, basest, most unprincipled villain I ever associated with; and I believe that, having secured his passage money, he would simply have let me die while I was helpless for want of ordinary attention. As matters went, however, I was convalescent before we reached the equator.

Our ship, the *Josef*, was taking out a cargo of corks to a famous bottling firm in Melbourne, engaged in the extensive exportation of Australian wines; Peter Tromp having been sent over to execute the commission. The details of the cork trade interested me but slightly; but judge my delight on discovering that this Peter of all trades had spent some time in Half-a-Guinea, and that the Poopooan language was one of his numerous linguistic acquirements. For I had before this perceived that I had a peculiar ascendancy over my Dutchman, and did not doubt but what I should be able to persuade him to join my expedition.

I am used to exercising a strong influence over my fellow-creatures, and bending them to my will; in fact, I possess the mesmeric faculty with regard to a great many, Peter Tromp being one of these. For as he was attacked one day with a racking toothache, I thought I would try the exercise of my magnetic power, and presently threw him into so complete a state of catalepsy, that at my command he drew his own offending molar (I mistrusting my own skill in dentistry) without being aware of the act; nor had he, when I woke him with a few passes, the slightest remembrance of what had taken place.

The voyage was tedious and uneventful; when we were becalmed the skipper went to sleep, while his crew gambled and quarrelled. The first real storm we had—it was off the Cape—he lost his head entirely, and I had to take command of the vessel. The man was the greatest coward I have ever met, and the ship the slowest and most rotten old tub that was ever sent on a long ocean voyage. However, we had fair weather and favourable winds as a rule, and after the lapse of many months we got well across the Indian Ocean, and flattered ourselves that we were positively about to reach our destination at last.

But now really bad weather set in; gale succeeded gale, we were driven out of our course, lost our reckoning and two of our masts, and sprung a leak. The

captain shut himself up in his cabin, and prayed to his patron saint; the crew could with difficulty be kept at the pumps; Peter Tromp deserved to be called Peter Trump, for he behaved like one; for my part, I remained for days and nights together at the wheel. At last, utterly worn out with fatigue, we both went below for the rest which had become absolutely necessary. How long I slept I know not, for my watch had not been wound up for days; but I was aroused by cold and wet, and found the floor of the cabin flooded with water. Guessing that the vessel was sinking, I rushed on deck: it was deserted, and looking to leeward I saw a boat—our only boat—riding over the waves, with the craven skipper and crew in her. I shouted and waved my handkerchief, but the wretches took no notice.

"They have deserted us, milord," said a quiet voice at my elbow.

And there stood Peter Tromp, who always gave me that title.

"Yes," said I; "but they are punished already—see!"

And as I spoke the boat capsized.

"They had better have stuck to the ship," said Peter.

"It matters not," I replied—"an affair of minutes."

"Not so; we cannot sink. Our cargo is all cork."

It was true enough; and that the fact should have escaped the memory of the captain and crew is a wonder, showing how utterly fear will disorder the intellectual faculties. Though there was a large hole in the starboard side, the vessel was only some four feet lower in the water, and there she remained; so that when, by the action of the waves, the forepart of the ship was lifted out of them, we could see the water pouring out of the leak again. We rolled, indeed, very heavily, and big seas continually swept the deck; but so long as we were not washed away, there was no fear of going to the bottom.

As if the skipper and his crew had been so many Jonahs, no sooner were they swallowed up than the gale moderated. In a few hours we were able to move comfortably, and the next day managed to hoist a bit of a sail on the foremast, the only one left standing.

We had plenty of provisions, brandy, wine, and tobacco. I steered; and Peter Tromp, who was a first-rate cook, prepared our meals. Sometimes one slept, sometimes the other. At times we lashed the wheel, and ransacked the skipper's cabin and the seamen's chests, and gathered whatever property was valuable together. The amount of specie found both surprised and delighted me. The captain, it seemed, had been in the habit of doing a little trading on his own account, and he carried his capital with him. There was also good store of powder and lead, together with a stand of old-fashioned muskets, and other matters useful in trading with semi-civilized people.

Altogether I was not in the position of most shipwrecked people, and did not look out at all anxiously for sails, not being sure but what any rescuing vessel would take possession of all these convenient stores under the title of salvage. Land of some sort was what I desired to make; and early one morning, when the first rays of the rising sun showed me a rose-coloured cone on the weather bow, I gave vent to a hurrah, which brought Peter Tromp to my side. He rubbed his eyes, looked again, and said—

"Can you work magic, milord?"

"That depends on what you call magic; but why the question?" I replied.

"Because I am almost certain that is Obree."

"And why does that make me a magician?"

"You wished to go to Half-a-Guinea?"

"Certainly."

"Well, milord, Obree is a Half-a-Guinea mountain."

Peter was quite right; and in less than forty-eight hours I ran the old *Josef*, fair and square, on to a reef of rocks not five hundred yards from the coast, where a village was visible, which Peter recognised as Howdow—a place from which the fragrant bark of the masooi, together with birds of paradise, pearls, ebony, and certain other products of the island, were exported to Singapore.

Soon numerous canoes swarmed around us, and, with Peter for an interpreter, I found no difficulty in engaging a number of them to land ourselves and the stores which we had packed and placed handy for the purpose. I also secured a hut in which to house them, and where we could live until my preparations for an expedition into the interior were complete.

These were not so readily settled, as I wished to secure the best party of followers I could, and the money and goods at my disposal authorized my being particular; so that it was a month before all my arrangements were complete, my reserve stores left in safe keeping—if there is such a thing in this world of suspended payments—the goods I intended to take with me selected, the loads apportioned, and the expedition fairly on its way for the interior of the country.

CHAPTER II.—FIRST EXPERIENCE OF HALF-A-GUINEA SPORT.

MY idea was to engage two intelligent Poopooans, or inhabitants of the coast, as head men, and to form the remainder of my party of Alfoers, as the natives of the interior are called. The former received regular wages, the latter I bought, slaves being amongst the articles of export assembled at the village of Howdow, where we had landed. I chose six, whose euphonious names were Booboo, Tata, Ponda, Squeely, Work, and Coger. The names of the two Poopooans were Atah and Tulu.

Of course I, as an English subject, could not really possess slaves; but the benighted savages would not have understood our nice distinctions in such matters, even had they been explained to them, which I did not think it at all necessary to attempt. Atah and Tulu were each responsible for three, apportioning their loads, and seeing that they did not lose or injure them.

Peter Tromp was my lieutenant, also cook, likewise naturalist, herbalist, and—last but most important in the early part of the expedition—interpreter. The whole party was armed; the head men with double-barrelled smooth-bores, the Alfoers with ships' muskets. Peter Tromp, who was no sportsman, carried the lightest fowling-piece he could find in my collection. My own battery consisted of a small-bore single rifle, which would perforate an oak plank at fifteen hundred yards; a double-barrelled rifle, carrying a large, heavy bullet, which I habitually used; and a powerful gun, taking a quarter of a pound of powder, and a bolt like a dumb-bell, which I had had made

expressly for elephant shooting, and called *Cruiser*, it kicked so viciously. Indeed, few besides myself could use it.

All these weapons were muzzle-loaders, as I like to be independent, and breech-loading cartridges cost more time and trouble for their manufacture than I care to devote to the purpose. I am a good practical chemist, and can make nitric and sulphuric acid wherever I am; and thus any amount of gun cotton is always at my disposal. Detonating powder is also easy of manufacture; and should my supply of percussion caps run short, I can supplement them. But Eley's, I confess, are far superior, and I had provided a very large supply.

Of other stores I did not load my men with many, being anxious not to cramp our movements in a difficult country. Some tea, a good stock of cake Cavenish, and a small still, however, were among our possessions. By way of side-arms, I carried a large-sized six-shooter, a long, heavy knife of extraordinary temper, with a good butcher's edge to it, worn in a sheath, and in an inside pocket a small Deringer. Also, on the little finger of my left hand, I wore a ring, in which was concealed a drop of the most powerful prussic acid that can be distilled. If I fell into the hands of savages with a turn for vivisection, I had no fancy for making them sport with my sufferings, and here was a way out of the dilemma.

I was glad when my preparations were complete, my men pretty well drilled—for I took some pains in training them to act in concert, after a fashion, and to obey their leaders, during the month—and all ready for a start. We set off an hour before sunrise, plunging at once into the forest, and making direct for a range of distant mountains. Our order of march, when there was no game afoot, and we were merely journeying, was this: Atah and his three men led the way, Peter Tromp and I followed, Tulu and his party brought up the rear. In the presence of danger we spread out in skirmishing order—Atah on the right, Tulu on the left, I in the centre, with pacific Peter close behind me.

When simply on the march, Tromp exercised me in the language of the country, until very shortly I spoke it as well as he did; and then I preferred conversing at times with one of the natives, so as to obtain a more accurate acquaintance with the idioms, and the Dutchman's office of interpreter became a sinecure. But I don't know what I should have done without him in the first instance.

We advanced rapidly the first day, as we were following the track made by a recent party that had brought slaves, ebony, &c., to Howdow; but the farther we advanced, the wilder and more tangled was the undergrowth, the more magnificent the trees. Everything, indeed, was on a most gigantic scale. The roses, or flowers answering to roses, were as big as cauliflowers, and the scent from them was almost overpowering, while the bees hovering about them were like dragon-flies, and I took their droning at first for native bagpipes. About noon the atmosphere became oppressively hot; the men could hardly carry their burdens, and I myself, though extremes of climate do not affect me much, broke out into a profuse perspiration. But 120° in the shade is exceptional warmth, and that was what the thermometer marked. So we called

a halt, and indulged in a siesta till the heat of the day should have passed. But I was very much annoyed by different insects who disturbed my slumbers, till at last I sat up, smoked a pipe to keep off the troublesome tormentors, and amused myself by watching the parrots. When I said that everything was gigantic, I should have excepted these, as they were pretty little fellows, about the size of wrens, and they darted about devouring the plaguy flies. Trying several decoy cries, I found one which attracted these parrotines; and by whistling and pretty-Pollyng them in a certain manner known to a few birdcatchers, and taught me once by an adept who lived in Seven Dials, I tamed them to such an extent that they hovered about me, and effectually kept off the stinging insects, while I enjoyed a sounder and more refreshing nap.

When we went on again I took Peter Tromp's shot gun from him, and killed a few quail for supper, larger game not having been sighted. Peter cooked them beautifully; and, served with a species of yam which abounded, and was bread and potato all in one, they furnished an excellent meal. The men, however, who were fond of animal food, determined to look more keenly for deer or buffalo next day—a state of mind which I encouraged.

Accordingly, early on the following morning, Atah made an exploring expedition on his own account, and soon came back with a report that he had sighted buffalo in an open space near some water. Leaving Peter at the bivouac fire, in charge of the baggage, I extended my party in skirmishing order, and advanced cautiously in the direction pointed out.

After proceeding through the brushwood for about half an hour, we came to a rocky mound, down the sides of which there ran a small stream, and Atah, who had glided up to my side, here laid his hand and pointed to the top of the rising ground, intimating that the game he had marked down was there. So, directing the others to halt where they were, I advanced in the direction indicated; and, clambering up a somewhat precipitous place by the aid of the creepers which covered its surface, I gained the top, and there saw such a sight as fills the hunter's heart with joy unspeakable.

On an open, grassy plain of about two hundred acres, on which, for some reason I am ignorant of, the trees refused to grow, there browsed a large herd of buffalo. They were about a thousand yards off, a feasible distance at Wimbledon, where ammunition is unlimited, and the targets stationary; but when you have to kill as well as to hit, when you cannot afford to waste lead, when it is most important not to reveal your position without effect, the case is entirely altered. In my humble opinion, to fire a shot in sport or in war at over three hundred yards is downright absurdity, except, of course, under very exceptional circumstances.

There was not a breath of wind, so I had not that to think of in my stalk; and there were tufts of bushes and lumps of rock here and there to aid me. Crawling on my hands and knees, or wriggling on my stomach, I worked from one point of vantage to another, loathsome and venomous reptiles gliding away at my approach, until, in about an hour, I got within a fair distance.

Then, after pausing awhile to recover my breath, I rose to my knees, and took a long and steady aim at a fine fellow who stood broadside on to me, fixing him

just behind the shoulder. I pressed the trigger, and when the smoke cleared I saw that he had fallen forward on his knees, while the rest of the herd stampeded in the direction I had come from, and would probably afford a shot to my men. The bull I had hit staggered to his feet again, and would have followed; but another shot dropped him like a stone, and when I reached him he was quite dead.

While I was reloading, I heard the most awful bellowing the mind can conceive: it was not like the ordinary roar of a bull of any species, but seemed impressed with a particular horror and terror of its own which made the blood run cold. It could not be wounded, for I had heard no shot. The sound drew me to the brink of the declivity I had climbed, and looking down from there, I saw the most appalling sight imaginable.

An enormous serpent had managed to catch a buffalo, which may probably have stumbled over the roots of the tree in which the reptile lay ambushed, and had encircled both tree and animal in its horrible folds. The bellowing came from the terrified and agonized beast that was being slowly squeezed to death. My men were running to the spot, and one of them had levelled his musket at the head of the serpent, who was hissing defiance at the interlopers.

The musket was fired: the bullet missed its unsteady mark.

The Best Pabulum.

IN our childhood's days, when people wanted light, this light was to a certain degree in its infancy. There was gas certainly, but it had not entered the domestic door; so the wealthy used wax and sperm candles, or costly lamps, burning whale or seal oil, and the poor were content with their tallow candles and snuffers. On great days—say, if company was expected—the dip candle gave place to a mould of exquisite form; but what a wretch was that for guttering, flaring, and burning with an unpleasant odour in the nostrils! At last the chemist took the tallow candle in hand, and proceeded to analyze it, separating it into stearine, glycerine, &c., and finding that while the former burned freely, and gave light, the latter was non-inflammable, and only made the tallow soft. Reasonably enough, he said, "Let us take this non-supporter of combustion away, then." This was done; and, roughly speaking, the hard composite candle was the result.

Chemists are now doing something of this kind for that great lamp, the human body, which goes on burning night and day through life, but requires its oil to supply the wick. For long enough past, the metaphorical oil which we have used has been of the coarsest description, and so long as the body has been healthy, no great harm has resulted; but when the lamp to be supplied has been the tender, fragile lamp of infancy, deprived of its nature-formed oil, or the old and battered lamp, worn by age or disease, the ordinary oil has failed to support combustion: it was too coarse, and the lamp has gone out.

Our men of science, then, have been looking about for means of eliminating from ordinary foods the unnecessary parts, reserving only those which go to support life in the human body, so as to help the invalid

and nourish the suckling deprived of its maternal fount.

One of the most important steps in this direction has been made by M. Henri Nestle, who, after much study and endless experiments, has succeeded in producing what he calls milk powder. Wherever extra nutriment has been required for the human body, or children have had to be brought up by hand, it has always been the custom to fly to milk, inasmuch as every six gallons contains the condensed essence of forty or fifty pounds of vegetable food. At the same time, eight-ninths of this is water, and only the one-ninth nutritive matter. Here, then, was the problem for the chemist—to drive off the eight-ninths of water, leaving the one-ninth of nutritive matter ready for taking up into the system and supporting life.

M. Nestle has done this in his Swiss manufactory: the rich milk of the country is rapidly concentrated in vacuo—in other words, pure fresh milk has all the water driven off, and is reduced to a powder. But this powder is not left in its simple state, for it is mixed with a second powder, of which some description is necessary.

The second powder is, so to speak, bread crust, but prepared in a peculiar manner, it having been discovered by chemists that crust is far more nutritious than crumb, even as highly baked flour is a better supporter of life—especially infant life—than the ordinary freshly ground corn meal. But here is the preparation of the milk powder as described by the chemist of the manufactory:—

“The very large quantity of milk daily used, comes fresh from the very considerable dairies of the manufactory, in the environs of Vevey. The milk, having been carefully examined, is poured into an apparatus and evaporated in vacuo, so that, excepting condensation, the properties of the milk remain unchanged. The bread is prepared from the best flour, according to a peculiar method, which preserves the nitrogenous substances, so that the flour employed in the preparation of the bread is rich in gluten. Moreover, as only the bread crust, reduced to the finest particles, is employed in the preparation of the milk powder, the richness in nitrogen is thereby increased. The extraordinary fineness of this mixture of milk powder and nitrogenous flour greatly facilitates the digestion of this highly nutritive product.”

This milk powder is a wonderful life supporter, and infants thrive upon it to a wonderful degree. It has proved to be by far the best food for a child deprived of its mother's help. Unlike many preparations recommended by chemists, it is cheap, and within the reach of all classes of society.

Above all things, it possesses the great advantage of freeing home from the tyranny of the dairyman. With milk powder in the house, a wholesome, life-sustaining food is always at hand, safe in winter, perfectly good in summer, when too often childhood is affected by those miserable stomachic ailments, the result of soured milk. As for the voyager by sea or land, the difficulties of taking very young children are obviated, so that, with a supply of Nestle's milk food on board a vessel bound on a long voyage, we should probably hear no more of the terrible infant mortality which is not caused by disease, but really by the want of proper nutriment.

Our allusions have more especially been confined to infant life; but in cases where the digestive organs have

been injured by long residence abroad and the diseases of hot climates, this powder is invaluable. As a rule, the ordinary food is rejected, and the patient sinks for want of the support that nature still demands. M. Nestle's ingenious combination meets this difficulty, and the various clever medical men who have adopted it give the best testimonial to the value of this simple but essentially valuable product.

It is but the taking of two of nature's best oils; but these, deprived of their non-combustible qualities, prove invaluable, and the lamp of life burns far more freely for their use. Sooner or later we shall have our chemists showing us how to eliminate other unnecessary matter from our food, and then perhaps we shall hear less of the horrors of indigestion.

Poets and Libels.

POET CLOSE writes as follows concerning the article which appeared in a recent number about the King of Dahomey. The note paper is headed with a scroll spread over a library table and a pile of the biggest possible folios—the said scroll being kept from falling by a bust, probably that of the writer—and upon the unrolled paper is printed as follows, in the same type as appears here:—

“FROM
Poet Close,
BOWNESS,
Windermere.

“July 8, 1876.

“SIR—A most foul and malicious libel on me has appeared in your paper of July 1, at page 212, and if not apologized for in your periodical, as well as in the London *Times*, to my satisfaction, an action at law will be forthwith commenced against you. Damages £500.

“J. CLOSE.

“Read the enclosed—another scoundrel is about to be prosecuted.”

Now, as we should be sorry to utter a foul and malicious libel against any man; and, moreover, as we have had quite enough poet libelling in the *Buchanan v. Swinburne* case; and further, moreover, as we do not care about appearing in court with “another scoundrel,” who seems to be a Wesleyan minister—for though company is good when going to be hanged, it might not be so in a case of libel—we will proceed to make a full retraction and apology, as we have evidently been misinformed. This is commonly called eating one's words; but if one is in the wrong, is it not better to eat a few parts of speech than to pay five hundred pounds to an enlightened jury if one's fellow-countrymen awarded it, and the costs of Poet Close and our own? We therefore withdraw the statements made at page 212, and beg to state, as they are in Mr. Close's opinion libellous, that they are utterly untrue from beginning to end. Our contributor must have been misinformed in stating that Mr. Close was made Poet Laureate to the King of Grand Bonny; that a literary pension of fifty pounds a year was bestowed upon him by the late Lord Palmerston, and then taken away, and compounded for by a payment down; that it was an offence which stank in the nostrils of every literary

man in England; that the poet's effusions were worthy of the Court for which they were designed; that this Poet Laureate sent out his poems broadcast, and that no editor or publisher would take them; and, lastly, that Mr. Close found an outlet for his poems amongst the blacks, where he would meet with no rivalry.

We think that we have touched here upon and retracted every statement that could be construed as libellous, and hope that Mr. Close will be satisfied. As he enclosed in his note a "Grand Impromptu Poem," and on the same sheet there is an account of the "other scoundrel," we print it verbatim in the same type and style (the italics are Mr. Close's own):—

"Grand Impromptu Poem
ON
HENRY KING SPARK, ESQUIRE,
OF SKIRSGILL PARK, PENRITH.

A "SPARK"—of the Almighty
Fire,
To live and bloom on earth
awhile—
On earth to scatter Flowers
around,
And make the Sorrowful
to smile.
A "SPARK"—of that Immortal
Fire,
That warm'd a Howard's breast;
To cause the care-worn all to sing
In Blessing—he is—blest!
A "SPARK" which in the "Man of
Ross"
Made many a *Widow's* heart to
swell,
And *Orphans* poor in sad distress,
With joy—unspeakable—
And thus—God raises up Good
Men,
The more they *give*—the richer
thrive;
And thus, the Poet and his Muse
Wishes such—LONG MAY LIVE!
SPARK! I love to think of Thee,
So gentlemanly, kind, and free;
I love to see thy genial smiling
Face,
And hear thee talk with learned
grace;

May 4th, 1876.

So gentle, courteous unto all,
That proves *Nobility of Soul!*
A pleasant word to cheer a friend,
And bid him struggle to the end.
A gleam of sunshine on Life's
way—
When sad in gloom, in dark dis-
may,
Thou *lifts him up*, and if in need,
Oft proves a very Friend indeed!
If press'd for *Gold*, thou sets him
free,
Hence blessed may thou ever be:
In Life—with Friends on every
side
And nothing lacking, but a—
Bride!
To warm thy heart and make Thee
sing,
And feel as happy as a King—
This be thy lot—if Heaven give
more.
Then thank thy God, and Him
adore!
And now, I must e'en make a
pause,
Thine faithfully,
THE POET CLOSE.

At my Book-stall Bowness,—still
alive,
Persecution ever makes me thrive!

"In the Wesleyan Chapel, Kendal, on the Evening of the 1st inst., a 'REV.' Mr. BEARDMORE, from York, (a Man more famous for Eloquence than Piety) in his Lecture on *The Lake Poets*, abused Mr. CLOSE most shamefully, and the Poet does not even *know* him, nor ever did him any harm! Nice Example of *Christian Charity* to the Poet, who is himself the Son of a Wesleyan Preacher, who in his life-time helped to *build many a Chapel*;—a nice specimen of *Wesleyan Piety!* The Poet is about to Prosecute this "Rev." Libeller—who ought to mind his Sermons, and let his *bettors* alone.

"Mr. Close begs to thank Mr. Severs, Chemist, of Kendal, (Chairman at the Lecture), who defended him; also certain of the Gentry of Bowness, who have cheered him in his distress.

"Also published, a New Poem in reply to the above, called *The Poet Close takes Summary Ven-geance!* Posted for Two Stamps. Address—POET CLOSE, at Bowness, Windermere."

The beauties of the poem will be seen at a glance. In the first lines we are reminded of Pope, but on getting to the widow and orphans, there is a tinge of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, with a flavour of Goldsmith and Wordsworth. Farther on, Southey seems to shine forth; while still farther, Robert Browning seems to have given his rugged lines, so full of philosophy, for a bridge to enable Swinburne to suggest the absence of the bride. Lastly, we have Heber and Keble joining hands, with a coda that might have been written by a modern Butler or a Barham. It will be seen, then, that the poem is almost perfect, by all who carefully peruse it; the only blemish being the slight difference in sound between "pause" and "Close" in the concluding lines.

The Note-book.

DR. WATTS says, "Birds in their little nests agree, and 'tis a shameful sight, When children of one family fall out, and chide, and fight." I quite agree with the good doctor, and therefore feel grieved that those children of the sun-god Apollo—Messrs. Buchanan, Swinburne, and Co.—should have fallen out and called each other bad names for writing "fleshly" poetry. The whole affair reads very much like an episode of schoolboy days, when Tibbs Major wrote naughty words on his slate, and Boggle went and told the master, and Tibbs Major had to do an imposition. Mr. Buchanan has contrived to get an imposition of £150—not lines—inflicted upon his adversary, though in this case it is not Tibbs Major, but somebody else who has to do the work. Silence would have been better in the whole case, for the consequence is that now all the boys in the school want to know what were the naughty words that Tibbs Major—otherwise Swinburne, Walt Whitman, and the rest—did write.

Fishers and oarsmen will bless the Thames Conservancy for instituting proceedings against the owners of the abominable steam launches on the Thames. For a long time past the river has been unsafe to those who would calmly enjoy its beauties. Certainly one had the choice of two deaths—running down or swamping; but when one goes out for pleasure, both are, to say the least, unwelcome. Blackguard butcher boys are taken up for furious driving in the streets, and it is impossible to see why mad owners of steam launches should be allowed to drive furiously along our beautiful water-ways. In the one case necessity of business may be argued, in the other there is no excuse whatever—except, perhaps, that an ass wishes to go fast, to the annoyance of everybody else. Heavy fines have been imposed in the case in question, one in which life was lost. In the next case it is to be hoped that fines will not be inflicted; but, if the injury be proved to be wilful, a more severe form of punishment be adopted.

Vaccination is causing a good deal of trouble still, and it is often brought before the attention of the House of Commons. A startling statement was made at Rugby petty sessions by a member of the Anti-Vaccination Society, who appeared in defence of two men charged with refusing to have their children vaccinated,

and not complying with a notice to do so. Addressing the bench on behalf of the defendants, he stated that "a medical gentleman had told him that he (the medical gentleman) had falsified certificates of death from vaccination, and had assigned other diseases as the cause of death, in order, as he said, to avoid creating public opposition to the law." Pleasant this; but I should like to see it endorsed.

Sir Charles Dilke will not bring Sunday omnibus fares before the House of Commons; and no wonder, for it is too small an affair. It is a disgraceful extortion, though, that on paying what one knows to be the regular fare, such as you have paid in your journey up to town, to be told that it is after eight o'clock on Sunday night, and consequently the fare is doubled, or the like. You are then referred to a notice on a board that you cannot see. The simplest way is to refuse to pay it, and let the proprietors summon you—if they dare.

Talk, though, of summoning, omnibus proprietors ought to be brought before the magistrates for allowing their vehicles to be in such a disgraceful state of oven this hot weather. No windows to open, the door kept vigorously closed, and the ventilator at the end stopped up with tarpaulins and driver's legs. Saints Rimmel, Piesse and Lubin, and Crown perfumers! what an odour is there, with twelve stout persons inside! Phew!

An inhabitant of Hampton is said to be so pleased at the bridge being free from toll, that he has spent a whole day in walking from Surrey into Middlesex and back again over the connecting link. How long will it be before the turn-tables at Waterloo, Hungerford, and Southwark railway bridge cease to click?

The Central News Agency states that the Greek merchants in London are organizing a committee to co-operate with their compatriots in all large European cities, in order to render aid to the insurgents in Turkey. The Greek merchants held a large private meeting with a view to the promotion of this object. The fact is that all the Greek Christian people are completely sick of the Great Ottoman, and want to cut it up, and turn it into footstools.

Go where we will now, it is to encounter the pleasant countenance of Sir Salar Jung or one of his suite, with showily embroidered garments, jewellery, and the inevitable puggaree of scarlet or white. Sir Salar is the lion of London for the time being. He has subscribed to the Horse Show prizes, and is to be complimented by the citizens, who propose presenting him with that mysterious talisman, the freedom of the City of London, in a box of the value of one hundred guineas. No one could object to the box, but as to the freedom—well, it is, after all, a great privilege to be able to stand in the same rank as John Gilpin, that citizen of credit and renown.

Captain Webb proposes to throw his last feat into the shade by swimming the Irish Channel. Captain Webb is probably in his right senses, but has he carefully calculated his chances of performing what will require double the endurance brought to bear over his

last feat? The Irish Channel is notorious for its boisterous waters and fiercely running currents. However, the stout swimmer knows best. In Captain Webb's case, nature has kindly fashioned him so that he floats in the water without effort; he has only to steer himself into the tideway at the right time, and the current does the rest. Well, there is no reason why he should not try if he likes; but, in the name of common sense, let us have no more of that sickly nonsense, "the hero of the Channel," and the like, with the subscribing of purses of a thousand guineas. Why, the man who leaps off a steamboat in the Thames to save a life is ten times the hero, and yet what is his reward?

Here is a pleasant piece of police news, which comes from Gravesend. Henry Jacobs and John Scott were charged with jumping overboard, and swimming ashore, to desert the ship *Callirhoe*. The men said when they shipped they did not know Mr. Bates was the owner, and they left on that account. They were sentenced to six weeks' hard labour. Who is to blame—the men for being afraid of shadows, or Mr. Bates? The other day this gentleman professed in the House that everything possible was done to make his ships satisfactory, and to guard the men from scurvy.

Government need not have made an institution of summer manœuvres, seeing how strongly they are carried on at home, as every parent knows. They are divided between two points, one bearing upon bonnets, the other upon—"Now, love, where shall we go this year?"

An accident has occurred upon the Metropolitan Railway which will in no wise increase the confidence of travellers. A train breaks down when half-way through a tunnel, and another follows and crashes into it at full speed. One may well ask what about your block system, and the care taken that no two trains should be in a tunnel at the same time? Seeing how rapidly the trains follow each other, such an accident should have been impossible. I don't know whether Sir Edward Watkin is still connected with that line; but if he is, will he, when he has done blowing up Sir Robert Peel, see to the matter, and also arrange so that passengers may have time to alight or get in when a train stops at a platform? Item: See that the law about people getting into a train when in motion is not made a dead letter. Item: See that porters do not stuff more than seventeen people into a third-class compartment. Seeing that ten is a tight fit, more than seventeen becomes unpleasant. Item: — Woa! I will not be too hard on him. *Quant. suff.* for the time being.

WE have worn a pair of Mr. W. J. Almond's new Patent Stocking Suspenders for over a month, and shall never think of wearing garters again on any account. The stocking is kept up just as well as with a garter, perhaps better; and certainly it is more easy and comfortable, and, doctors say, much more beneficial, especially for those who suffer from varicose veins. Mr. Almond informs us that they may be had of any first-class hosiery or draper in the kingdom, or he would send them by post for 2d. extra from his address, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Price—Children's, 1s. 6d.; Young Ladies', 2s.; Ladies', 3s.

The Sioux Indians.

TERRIBLE news comes from New York about the destruction of General Custer's force by the Sioux, in the Big Horn County.

It appears that after several days' scouting General Terry, who commanded the expedition in the Yellowstone River, came to the conclusion that the main force of the Indians was somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Big Horn.

After consultation between Terry, Gibbon, and Custer, it was decided that Custer should follow the trail of the Indians with the 7th Cavalry, and strike them in front, while the remainder of the expedition, consisting of five companies of infantry and four of cavalry, and a Gatling battery, under Terry and Gibbon, were to make a *détour* and ascend the Big Horn at the farther side, to assail the enemy in the rear.

The march of the two columns was so planned as to bring Colonel Gibbon's forces within co-operating distance of the anticipated scene of action by the evening of the 26th June. In this way only could the infantry be made available, as it would not do to encumber General Custer's march with foot soldiers.

On the evening of the 24th, Colonel Gibbon's command was landed on the south bank of the Yellowstone, near the mouth of the Big Horn, and on the 25th was pushed twenty-three miles over a country so rugged that the endurance of the men was tasked to the uttermost. The infantry then halted for the night; but the Department-Commander with the cavalry advanced twelve miles farther to the mouth of the Little Big Horn, marching until midnight in the hope of opening communication with General Custer.

This is the region visited by Lord Dunraven a short

time since, an account of which he gives in his book, "The Great Divide," where he discourses at some length about the Yellowstone River and the Big Horn, a review of the work with copious extracts having appeared in our pages.

The morning of the 26th brought the intelligence, communicated by three frightened Crow scouts, of the battle of the previous day and its results. The story

was not credited, because it was not expected that an attack would be made earlier than the 27th, and chiefly because no one could believe that a force such as General Custer commanded could have met with disaster. Still, the report was in no way disregarded. All day long the toilsome march was kept up, and every eye bent upon a cloud of smoke resting over the southern horizon, which was hailed as a sign that General Custer had been successful, and had fired the village.

It was only when night was falling that the weary troops lay down upon their arms. The infantry had marched twenty-nine miles. The march of the next morning revealed at every step some evidence of the conflict which had taken place two days before. At an early hour the head of the column entered a plain half a mile wide bordering the left bank of the Little Big Horn, where had recently been an immense Indian village, extending three miles along the stream; and there were still standing funeral



SIOUX ON THE WAR-PATH.

lodges, with horses slaughtered around them, and containing the bodies of nine chiefs.

The ground was strewn everywhere with bodies of horses, cavalry equipments, buffalo robes, packages of dried meat, and weapons and utensils belonging to Indians. On this part of the field was found the clothing of Lieutenants Sturges and Porter, pierced with bullets, and a blood-stained gauntlet belonging to

Colonel Yates. Farther on were found bodies of men, among whom were recognized Lieutenant M'Intosh, the interpreter, from Fort Rice, and Reynolds, the guide.

Just then, a breathless scout arrived with the intelligence that Colonel Reno, with a remnant of the 7th Cavalry, was entrenched on a bluff near by, waiting for relief.

The command pushed rapidly on, and soon came in sight of a group surrounding a cavalry guard upon a lofty eminence on the right bank of the river. General Terry forded the stream, accompanied by a small party, and rode to the spot.

All the way the slopes were dotted with the bodies of men and horses. The general approached, and the men swarmed out of the works, and greeted him with hearty and repeated cheers. Within was found Major Reno, with the remains of seven companies of the regiment, with the several officers, all of whom were unhurt. In the centre of the enclosure there was a depression in the surface, in which the wounded were sheltered, covered with canvas. Major Reno's command had been fighting from Sunday noon, the 25th, until the night of the 26th, when Terry's arrival caused the Indians to retire.

Up to this time Major Reno and those with him were in complete ignorance of the fate of the other five companies, which had been separated from them on the 25th to make an attack under General Custer on the village at another point. While preparations were being made for the removal of the wounded, a party was sent on General Custer's trail to look for traces of his command.

They found awaiting them an appalling sight. At a point about three miles down the right bank of the stream, General Custer had evidently attempted to ford and attack the villages. From the ford the trail was found to lead back up the bluffs, and to the northward, as if the troops had been repulsed and compelled to retreat, and at the same time had been cut off from regaining the forces under Major Reno.

The bluffs along the right bank come sharply down to the water, and are interspersed with numerous ravines.

All along the slopes and ridges, and in the ravines, lying as they had fought, line behind line, showing where defensive positions had been successively taken up and held until none were left to fight, lay the bodies of the fallen soldiers; then, huddled in a narrow compass, horses and men were piled promiscuously.

At the highest point of the ridge lay General Custer, surrounded by a chosen band. Here were his two brothers and his nephew, Mr. Reed. The last stand had been made, and here, one after another, these last survivors of General Custer's five companies had met their death.

The companies had successively thrown themselves across the path of the advancing enemy, and had been annihilated. Not a man had escaped to tell the tale; but the story was inscribed on the surface of the barren hills in a language more eloquent than words.

In "The Great Divide," Lord Dunraven, who seems to have crossed the very place of the massacre, dwells at some length upon the cruel policy of trickery that has been pursued towards the Indians, and he gives the

words of the Indians upon the subject. And now a writer in the *Daily News* speaks out boldly, truthfully, and well, about the present relations of the United States Government and the Red Man. He says:—

"While the English press is yet loud in its expression of regret over the fate of General Custer and his troopers, killed in fair fight amid the defiles of the Black Hill country in South Montana, it may not be out of place to glance back at some earlier scenes in this long conflict of Red Man against white, and to trace the ceaseless western drift of the once powerful Sioux or Dakota nation to the Black Hills, where now they are making a last despairing stand for home and life.

"Forty years ago, a vast territory owned the dominion of the Dakota nation. From where the forest region ended, near the parent springs of the Mississippi, to where the Platte had its source in the fastnesses of the great Western range, the land was all their own. The great prairie of what is to-day Minnesota, Dakota, and a portion of Nebraska, for 600 miles by 200, was wholly and fully theirs.

"By various treaties during the last forty years, successive portions of this territory were given up to the United States. 'Agencies' were established among the different branches of the Dakota nation. Reservations were marked out for them, generally in remote and arid regions, and annual subsidies were transmitted in kind to the agents for distribution according to treaty among the chiefs and heads of families.

"For a short time after the signing of a treaty, things went on pretty smoothly. Then the tide of white immigration would draw nearer to the reserve, demands would be made for the Indian land by speculators and settlers, and farther west, into more arid wastes, would drift the ever-lessening stream of the Red Man's race. Like Jo, in 'Bleak House,' the Indian was kept 'always a-moving on,' nearer the setting sun and the limits of the game world.

"'You have many friends,' said a Sioux brave to an American officer, some eighteen years ago—'you have many friends, but we have only one friend, the buffalo. What shall we do when he is gone? I ask you because, like me, you are a soldier, and will understand what I say to you.'

"But it was not only loss of home and of food that he had to complain of. The men sent as agents to the reservations were, generally speaking, persons of a very low type; they cheated, tricked, and robbed the Indians in many ways. One agent had the audacious villainy to pay the annual subsidy to the Sioux in greenbacks instead of gold, at a time when paper was at 200 per cent. discount; another, knowing the fondness of the Indians for medicine, set up an apothecary's shop in the Reserve, and sold common paints and oils to his Indians as good drugs and medicines.

"Then came the Minnesota massacre. All at once the Sioux swept down on the settlements, up to the waters of the Mississippi. At last a large force, under General Sibley, pushed the remnants of the great nation over the Côteau des Prairies, and across the Missouri River. Here they were left; for the almost impenetrable fastnesses of the Mauvais Terres lay southward from the Missouri to the Black Hills. Sibley,

himself half a Sioux, knew better than to follow them into these steep, rugged defiles.

"A few years after this another large branch of the tribe, which had its hunting grounds along the north and south forks of the Platte River, was induced to resign its Nebraska lands and to move north into the country of the Black Hills; thus the widely separated branches of the Dakota nation became at length forced together in a wild and inhospitable land, where stunted grass and sage bush covered hill and plain.

"It is scarcely four years since the writer of this met on the Assiniboine River a party of twenty-five Sioux Indians who had travelled for thirty days on horseback from those same Black Hills, to beg from the English governor of Manitoba a refuge on British soil.

"The game was gone," they said, "from their lands; they did not know where to seek a home."

"The refuge could not be granted to them, and they returned to their tribe, to tell those who sent them that in all the wide wilderness of the North and West there was no home for the once lords of the central prairies.

"But about eighteen months ago a mandate went forth that the Dacotahs were to move again, and that the Black Hills were to be given up. They sullenly refused to go, although they found by bitter experience that the refusal meant death.

"Does any man dare to blame them? Does any man dare to say that they fought not in a just and holy cause when they mustered on the war-path for this the last time, to meet Cook, and Custer, and Reno, and the other Indian hunters of the West, or does any man in England understand for one moment what would have been the other side of the question if Custer and his cavalry had succeeded in piercing that defile in the Little Horn, and striking the Indian camp he had intended to surprise?

"Well, if people in England don't know what would have happened, I will tell them.

"Every man, woman, and child would have been butchered as they stood, fought, lay, or fled. I am not speaking from mere supposition, but from the certainty that what has already occurred scores of times would occur again; from the knowledge of what General Custer has himself admitted about his former exploits, and from what every one who has lived on the plains knows full well. Not a child, not a sick man would have been left of that camp.

"Uncle Sam don't want no prisoners, I guess," would have been the morning order spoken, if not written, that day.

"When Baker destroyed the Blackfeet on the Milk River, he left not a living soul out of those 170 Peagins wretches already half dead from small-pox; when 'King' Wolsey began the Apache war by inviting some hundreds of that tribe to a feast, and in the midst of the festivity withdrew to a neighbouring copse and fired a cannon, previously loaded to the muzzle with bullets, into their ranks; when the Oregon Volunteers waylaid and shot the Modoc prisoners in cold blood, as they were being conveyed in waggons to Fort Klamath, after the surrender of the Lava beds; when Custer himself carried death to all Red Men along the Canadian river of Kansas—what mercy was there shown to Indian man or woman? And now, when the Red Man gets his chance, and in fair and open fight meets and slays his long-relentless enemy, can any man say that the

Indian's quarrel was not just, and the white man's fate as fully justified as any strife or any death since fighting first began?"

Taking all things into account, Lord Dunraven must have saved himself by the skin of his teeth, for such a region must have its drawbacks for those who travel with the face called pale.

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPER XXIV.—FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

SPRING light and spring freshness combined to give a charm to the morning room in which Eva Knowles tended her birds and flowers. It was a bright, pleasant room, opening into the garden, and filled with objects of interest and luxury. Looking out at the door window, the eye encountered a fountain making rainbows in the sunshine. Turning from the window, there was the fountain with the trees about it, and the mosaic of flowers in the midst of which it rose reflected in twenty different bright and sparkling objects.

But in this charming room there was no object so charming as the fresh, rosy, joyous maiden who flitted to and fro in the mere restlessness of uncontrollable joy. She wore a dainty morning robe, white, with a pink ribbon confining it at the waist, and the pure simplicity of this attire looked superb.

Now hovering near her birds, now tending her flowers, anon snatching up a book, she was all life and movement; and the joy that gave added lustre to her beauty found utterance in snatches of song, which the birds tried in vain to repeat.

It was the spring-time of the year and of life.

More than all, it was that halcyon season which never returns—the spring-time of love.

In all she did, the thought of Harcourt had part. Whatever she prized was valued for his sake. Her pets were his gifts; her relics trifles which he had admired, lines he had written, and books he had marked.

Of his unworthiness she knew nothing, for she had treated the attempt of Ruby Framlingham to open her eyes with the scorn she believed it merited. Of the dangers to which he had been exposed no whisper had reached her ears. Since he had come to her, and assured her of his recovery from the shot which so nearly ended his life, she had not dreamed of further trouble, further danger. And hearing and knowing nothing, she was supremely happy.

So it gave her a little—just a very little—start when presently, in the midst of an outburst of exuberant song, the door opened, and Edgar Knowles, her father, looked in, with a grave, troubled face.

"Oh, pa, dear, are you not well?" she cried out, rushing towards him.

"Quite well, darling," he replied, kissing her sweet brow; "but a little perturbed. That's all."

"Perturbed!" she echoed. "About what? Not about me?"

"Well," he replied, hesitating, "I cannot say no; but come, let us sit down out here, in the garden chairs in the shade of the awning, and chat a little. I have much to say to you."

They sat down; the father with a face brightening

with affection, his child with as demure a look as she could command. She was sorry, of course, to see him sad, and to know that something troubled him; but it is not easy for the very happy to sympathize at once with what belongs to the gloomy side of life's experiences.

"I think, darling," Edgar Knowles said, drawing his child close to his side—"I know, indeed, that you love me very fondly?"

"You do not doubt it?" Eva replied, in a hurt tone of voice.

"No, I do not," was the answer; "and it is because I do not that I am sure you will never do that which will bring dishonour upon me and misery upon yourself."

She gazed in his face. All her colour fled. She was lost in amazement.

"Oh, what, what have I done?" she demanded, piteously.

"Nothing, Eva," was the rejoinder—"nothing wrong, nothing unworthy of you. I am not about to blame you for anything. You have been all love, affection—everything my darling child should be. And it is because of this that I come to you now, to speak to you, not as a child—for you are no longer one—but as a woman, capable of understanding, and of guiding your conduct by reason rather than impulse."

The poor girl took one of her father's hands in both of hers, and looked up archly into his face, with a half-smile upon her features.

"Is it so very dreadful, pa?" she asked.

He turned aside impatiently.

"Is it really, really dreadful?" she persisted, "or only one of the long, long speeches you used to make in the House? You frown. Forgive me. I was wrong to jest."

What could he do but draw her tighter to his heart?

"When I spoke of reason just now," he said, "it was because I want you to be very reasonable, and to try and understand, and try and act as your reason prompts you. It is inexpressibly painful to me to cast a shadow over your happiness; but the shadow is not of my making. In a word—for, first or last, the truth must be spoken—you have given your heart to a man who is unworthy of you."

She sprang to her feet.

"Who dares say this?" she demanded. "But I know. It is Ruby's wicked jealousy that prompts these wicked slanders. Because I refused to relinquish Edmund to her, she has tried to poison your mind, and to gain her spiteful purpose that way. Oh, it is cruel, mean, wicked—"

"Hush, darling!" the father interposed; "you are wronging Ruby Framlingham, as we have all wronged her. In spite of appearances, in spite of the painful rebuff she was certain to receive, she sought to put you on your guard. You repulsed her: it was natural, but unfortunate; for you have nourished a poisonous weed which every hour has twined more and more fatally about your heart, and will be all the more difficult to tear away. Yet this must be done. You must be true to yourself, Eva, and relinquish all thoughts of this Harcourt as a lover, since, I repeat, he is utterly unworthy of you."

Standing before him, her face flushed, her eyes blazing, her hands closing and unclosing with feverish im-

patience, the girl hardly waited to hear her father to the end. Then she cried, petulantly—

"It is wicked—wicked, to say this!"

"It is true."

That was his quiet answer.

"True! What, then, has he done? What is his crime? I know; it is some miserable question of family. He is not rich enough, high enough in the world, has not prospects brilliant enough. Oh, these miserable barriers! If he is true, and good, and noble—if he loves me, as he does—I know he does—why, why should these things come between us and our happiness?"

Tears glittered on her eyelashes, her mouth quivered, and the roses in her cheeks deepened to crimson as she spoke.

Edgar Knowles rose, took both her hands in his, and gently drew her back to the seat from which he had risen.

"Listen to me, Eva," he said. "If there were no stronger objections than those you have named, I should have a natural repugnance to this match. Our family, if not of the highest, is yet good. It has never yet been disgraced by a *misalliance*. Step by step we can trace our ancestry back beyond the Stuarts, without a stain, a flaw, a missing link; and there is something noble in ancestry. 'A man who has ancestors is a representative of the past,' if only they entail no disgrace upon his name. But I will not press this: I will not say one word as to the husband I should have wished for my child. Your happiness is more to me than all else, and I scarce know the man I would not have received as a son-in-law had I felt assured that by the step happiness would have been secured. In this case, my child, I am persuaded no such result is possible. You love him truly, but that love is not returned—"

"Oh, you cannot—cannot know this!" the indignant girl interposed.

"But I do," he persisted. "I know it, because my knowledge of life teaches me that a bad, cruel, selfish man is incapable of returning the affection of the pure and innocent. And this man is branded with much more than all this. He is at best an unscrupulous adventurer; what he is at worst, I shudder even to conjecture. That time alone can show; but in the meanwhile it becomes my duty to protect my child from his wiles, and to see that you do not fall a victim to his insidious approaches. He loves you, Eva, for your fortune; he loves you because an alliance with our family would give him the position he needs. This is the secret of that false love, which in your eyes appears equal in worth to that with which you return it."

She heard, but was not convinced.

Her faith in the idol of her young heart was unshaken.

"Oh, papa," she cried, clasping her hands in passionate entreaty, "do not listen to these slanders! Pray, pray, do not believe them! They are not true. Edmund is good and noble. You cannot mean that I should abandon him, and think of him no more? Impossible! I can die, but I cannot cease to love."

"Eva, darling," was the quiet response, "I might have acted—I ought, perhaps, to have acted—in this matter more as other fathers would have done. Weakness, springing from affection for you, my child, has

been the source of all this evil. I ought never to have permitted him to approach you until he had satisfied me that he was worthy to become your husband; and feeling certain that he is not, I ought at once to forbid him your presence, and to command you to see him no more. But my love has betrayed me into a wish that you should yourself pronounce on your own fate. I had hoped that your self-respect would have led you at once to decline any further attentions from one whom you felt would in any way compromise you, or those about you. In this I am disappointed; but I am willing to believe that it is because you know so little that you are thus disposed to act in opposition to my will."

These were painful words to Eva, to fall from lips which had never before given utterance to aught save terms of endearment; but she was not moved to acquiescence. A stubborn something in her heart kept it firm to the verge of obstinacy.

"It is not opposition, papa, dear," she exclaimed. "Do with me what you will. Take me from him, if it is your wish. Kill me, if you have the heart; but I will never believe him the thing you make him, and I can only cease to love him with my life."

"Not if you are convinced of his worthlessness?"

"I must love him."

"Not if it is proved to you beyond all question that his views are selfish and mercenary, and that he is incapable of all real affection?"

"Then," she replied, hesitating, "then, perhaps—but no! It is not so! I wrong him even in admitting the possibility that you may be right. Oh, why—why have you brought this misery upon me? An hour ago there was no one in the world so happy, and now it seems all gone—all passed away. I love you so much, indeed, indeed I do; but I love Edmund better than myself—better than the whole world—and how can I cast him off? What am I to do?"

"One thing, Eva—one thing which you owe to yourself as well as to me, and Heaven knows I have no object save your happiness. Promise me that, if convinced that Edmund Harcourt is a villain, you will cheerfully relinquish him?"

"Not cheerfully—I cannot. Oh, why do you ask me to do what is impossible? Yet I will try—I will try."

"You promise this? You will try?"

"I will"—she laid her hand in her father's as she spoke—"but I know, I am sure, it is unnecessary. Still, I promise. Convince me of what I cannot now believe, and I will—I will see him no more."

"And you will try to forget him?"

"I will try, but—"

"But what, darling?"

"You will not forbid him the house? You won't tell him I have ceased to love him, or have grown indifferent, or—anything to keep him away?"

"I will not. That is my promise. If I break it, you are released from yours. Oh, my child, you cannot know how inexpressibly painful all this is to me. It seems to estrange us—to raise a barrier between us for the first time in our lives; but you will believe that it is my love only which prompts this step, and remember that it was in my power to have taken one much sterner and more prompt."

She did not reply, but raised her face, wet with tears,

to his, and her arms circled his neck as he kissed her in the old childish way.

Then they parted, and Eva was left alone—alone and wretched. In the few minutes this had occupied, all had changed. A cloud had come over the sun; there was a chillness in the spring breeze. The fountain no longer fell amid rainbows; it was merely weary water, rising and falling wearily. The birds were still, the flowers drooped, and there no longer rang forth jubilant music from the lips of the mistress of all—lips now parched and feverish—who cowered down beside a chair, in her white, tumbled dress, choked with her tears, and unconscious of the sympathy of all about her in the change she felt so acutely.

That night and the next there was a strange rumour current at the clubs at the West-end. The news of Captain Pagnell's death had reached them, as well as the strange circumstances under which it had taken place, and people were all speculating whether the charge on which he was arrested was a true one—whether he really was guilty of conspiracy to obtain twenty thousand pounds? The general impression was against this, for it will be found that death has ever a wonderful effect in softening acerbities and healing slanderous reports. Its awfulness has an effect on the most flippant and venomous.

With this, two other points were discussed. One was the probability as to the claim for the money being persisted in by Pagnell's associates, if he had any, and the possibility of the charge founded on the fraudulent nature of that claim extending to others.

In addition, this rumour was whispered about—that by Pagnell's death a heavy loss would fall on Edgar Homersham Knowles, late M.P. for Piddinghoe, who was said to have advanced heavy sums by way of mortgage on title deeds now discovered to be forgeries, and incurred liabilities on the captain's behalf.

And knowing people, shrugging their shoulders, said—

"If true, Knowles is a ruined man."

CHAPTER XXV.—WHEN THIEVES FALL OUT.

THE spring sunshine, struggling through the thickly encrusted windows, made a feeble glow in the room in which Marco lived. If not so picturesque in that aspect as when the swing lamp was lit, it was still a place to charm the eye of an artist.

Dust encrusted the quaint furniture; dust rested like a bloom on the pottery, the armour, the bronzes, the weapons, and the innumerable relics of many climes which gave the room its character. It was Marco's whim—or say, rather, the artist instinct in him—to have it all thus; though, perhaps, the absence of Zerina—whose fresh beauty was wont to give tone to the dinginess by force of contrast—had something to do with it.

The girl no longer pined in the solitude of the old house.

Her dear friends the Dormer-Pagets had grown too fond of her to suffer that. They had declared that she would be "moped to death." They had insisted on her making their house her home, and Marco had yielded the point. Considering all things, he had yielded it readily; for while protesting that they would rob him of the only joy of his life, he had offered no

strong opposition. Her good, he said, demanded the sacrifice, and he had made it.

The generous Marco!

His darling's loss naturally left him very lonely; but on this morning he was not left to his own resources. While he sat at the corner of the table—his accustomed seat, plying with restless fingers the occupation in which he so excelled, that of restoring costly laces by an adroit use of the needle—he was engaged in conversation with two visitors both well known to us.

On the opposite corner of the table, Edmund Harcourt sat, supporting himself on his right leg and swinging the other, while away under the window his inseparable companion, Randolph Agnew, reclined on a roll of tapestry, puffing fiercely and vigorously at his pocket meerschaum. Of these three, Marco alone was smiling complacently. The others looked pale, wasted, and perturbed. As to the younger of the three, though he appeared to be absorbed in his pipe, it was clear that he only smoked it as an outlet for restlessness; for his eyes flamed, his lips were parched, and he was constantly shifting his position.

"So the claim for the *Hannah* is to be abandoned?" Marco asked, quietly, hardly looking up from his work.

"Confound it, yes!" was Harcourt's reply. "What else can happen? Pagnell alone was in a position to demand the money, and we know the risk even he ran. Who else could do it, or would face the danger, even if the thing were possible?"

Marco shrugged his shoulders.

"And all the money we have risked is to be lost?" he asked.

"Clearly—unless you see your way out of the difficulty."

A shake of the head was the only answer.

"Of course not," said Harcourt; "and so the money goes. It isn't likely that I should run the chance of coming forward and identifying myself with anything so fishy. Heaven knows how suspicions came to be stirred up against us, or what led to the bold step of Pagnell's arrest. There must have been treachery somewhere."

"Doubtless."

"Hang it, man, don't take it in that quiet way! You're enough to make a man believe that you had a hand in the treachery, as you might have had for all I know. You're close and crafty enough."

The blood died out of Marco's face. He was one of those dangerous men who do not flush with anger, but grow deadly pale under its effects.

"Most like, Mister Harcourt," he said, bitterly; "'tis most like that I should risk my money, waste my time, give place here to your dangerous meetings, and when the end comes, and the prize is to be snatched, turn traitor against myself. Oh, this is most likely! And I thank you for your high opinion of my good sense, Mister Harcourt."

Harcourt listened with amazement.

He was by no means remarkable for gentleness or forbearance; but hot, impetuous, quick to anger, his wrath was of quite a different stamp from that of the man who confronted him. It was hot English blood, not the coldly oozing venom of the Italian's veins. Thus, while Marco grew corpse-like, Harcourt flamed up, his eyes burning like coals, his cheeks crimson.

"What do you mean, confound you?" he burst out,

in genuine amazement at the words which had greeted his ears. "Do you want to insult *me*? A nice return, I'm sure, for all that I've done for you for years past—for the chances I've given you, and the confidence we've all reposed in you! A pretty return, and no mistake! Do you forget what you were when I first took you under my wing?"

The Italian bowed with irritating formality.

"I had the honour to be your excellency's secretary," he said. "As an Italian born in England, and knowing the language of both countries, I was permitted to act as go-between in your villainies, and to get you out of all your dangers. For that duty I was paid with promises and lies—equivalent terms where your excellency is concerned."

"Why, you miserable hound!" shrieked Harcourt, with that genuine contempt which an Englishman always feels for one of another country, "did I not pick you out of the gutter?"

"True—to drop me in the sewer."

"Were you worth a penny when I gave you a chance of making a man of yourself?"

"Perhaps not; and if the chance you gave had been all I had to look to, is it ungrateful to doubt whether I should have been worth that sum now?"

"Ungrateful beast!" was the Englishman's answer.

"Take care!" cried Marco, with suppressed fury—"the beast has teeth. The beast provoked will bite."

"The hand that feeds it—true."

"Feeds!"

The bitterness of the Italian's contempt vented itself in the hissing repetition of this word. But his eyes glared, and there was an involuntary movement of the fingers that meant mischief.

"Listen to me, Hilton Gathorne," he continued, screaming in a high, feminine tone. "What if I should say to you that you have been a cur, a beast, a devil in the past; that you are a cur, a beast, a devil in the present; and what you were and are you will live and die? What if I should say you robbed me of the woman who made the sunshine of the world to me, made her your toy while the fit lasted, and in your weariness threw her aside to rot and die in the ditch, or worse—worse than this—despatched her with your own hand?"

"Marco!"

Raising both hands with a quick, terrified movement, as if to stay the speaker in his growing fervour, Harcourt gave a hurried glance in the direction of Randolph Agnew.

The lad was still drawing at his pipe, with eyes raised in surprise at what he was witnessing; but there was nothing in his face to indicate horror, or even consternation.

"I repeat," Marco fiercely insisted, "with your own hand, and God above knows if this be true or false! What, again, if I should say you have made me your cat's-paw from first to last? Mine has been the danger—yours the reward. My brains have thought, my hands have toiled, and you in your lordly condescension have stooped to pick up the fruits shaken from the boughs at your feet. And what if I should add that this shall be so no longer? I spurn you—I wash my hands of you. I will be your slave, your footfall, your underling, your beck-and-call-spaniel no more. I have done with you. I throw you off. Go to perdition your own way. What, if

I said all this, Mister Edmund Hilton Gathorne, Harcourt, whatever your miserable name is?"

"If you said all this!" Harcourt burst in, as soon as he could find an opening—"why, you are saying it, you ungrateful beggar—saying it to me, who have made you, and have the power to crush you—to bring you to the dogs. You smile?"

"Liar! I smile not. I laugh."

"At me?"

"At you."

"And you think I will suffer this?"

"I know it, because you—you are a coward."

Hardly were the words out of his lips before Harcourt had sprung upon him with a ready fierceness which effectually gave the lie to that charge. They grappled; their bodies were swaying to and fro; first one and then the other was in danger of being thrown. It was a contest between the strength of the Englishman and the litheness of the Italian. In this contest, the latter was rapidly getting the worst of it, when he adroitly slipped his hand from the grasp—from the iron grip that like a manacle encircled the wrist—and the next instant raised it in the air.

There was a flash, and a scream from the lips of Randolph Agnew.

"The knife! the knife!" he cried, springing to his feet.

The Man in the Open Air.

AN engineer with whom we had the pleasure of travelling lately, giving several instances of hints for mechanical improvement being obtained from the observation of nature, told us that the mode of taking up water for the supply of a locomotive boiler without stopping the speed was due to seeing the swifts drinking while on the wing; for all the swallow kind sip their water as they sweep over the face of pools or rivers; like Virgil's bees, they drink flying—"*Flumina summa libant.*"

Gipsies first attracted notice in the beginning of the fifteenth century, and within a few years afterwards they had spread themselves all over the Continent. The earliest mention that is made of them was in the years 1414 and 1417, when they were observed in Germany. In 1418, they were found in Switzerland; in 1422, in Italy; and in 1427 they are mentioned as having been seen in the neighbourhood of Paris, and about the same time in Spain. In England they were not known until some time after. One remarkable part of their history is their continuing the same unsettled mode of life, and rigidly keeping apart from all other people. It is impossible to find a greater similarity in the traits of character, and the manners exhibited by different tribes of the same family, than that which is observable amongst the gipsies of the different countries of Europe, under whatever appellation they are known. The habits of the *cygani* of Hungary, the *gitano* of Spain, the *zigenners* of Transylvania, the *zingari* of Italy, the *bihennen* of France, the gipsy of England, the tinker of Scotland, are identical, whether we regard their physical distinction or their mode of subsistence. One thing is certain, that although most people avoid them

and many hold them in fear and aversion, they are not only a most interesting race to, but especial favourites with, artists, amongst which we rank ourselves. Where confidence is accorded to them, we never knew them to betray the trust; and our folios and sketch books would be most incomplete without a few groups of these interesting and picturesque persons, nor a rustic bye-lane, common, or racecourse properly furnished if it lacked a tent or two, or house upon wheels. We recommend a closer study of them and their customs to all men who love the open air, promising much that is of interest, if not value, in reward for a more intimate acquaintance. We, however, warn their would-be temporary associate against anything which approaches undue familiarity or patronage with either their wives or children, which the indomitable pride of the real gipsy cannot tolerate or patiently submit to. Meet them upon an easy equality, and you will find them fully deserving of consideration, if not of respect.

A well-authenticated case of involuntary fasting on the part of a cat has come to our notice. On the 12th May, a Persian cat—a very timid one—was sent as a present to the narrator. On the morning of the 13th, the cat had disappeared. On the 9th of June, the mewing of a cat was heard in a room, and traced to the chimney, the register of the stove of which was closed. This being opened, there was the long-lost Persian, in a most emaciated condition, with its bones almost through its skin, and totally incapable of standing. Unable to eat, it lived on milk for a couple of days, and is now getting on well, though it cannot walk. It has probably been without food for a calendar month—twenty-eight days. It has been suggested that she might have existed upon birds building in the chimney, but there was no such thing; and had there been, the flue, being perfectly vertical and smooth, would have severely tested even the climbing powers of a cat.

It has often been a doubtful question whether moles could swim, and if so, whether they took naturally to the water. Some experiments, however, have recently been tried to settle the matter, which has been done in the affirmative. Owing to the richness of their fur, they are kept on the water as buoyant as a cork. Mr. Thomas Gibson, of Glasgow, a close and intelligent observer of nature, says it is quite a usual thing, and, in fact, almost a necessary thing, for them to swim, and that he never heard of a mole being drowned.

Mr. H. Stanley Thorpe, of Hertford, a member of the Bicycle Club, has recently accomplished a ride from Highgate to York in 22½ hours, a distance of 195 miles.

The East-end angling clubs have always viewed with great jealousy the maintenance of the subscription waters on the River Lea, and have contested with equal persistency their right to fish from the towing path. It has been vain to attempt to persuade them that the towing path is not a public highway—that it is let by the landowners to the Lea Conservancy for the purposes of navigation only, and that that board pay a rent for it; indeed, that if such rental were to fall into arrears the landowners could lock or nail up the gates, as the landowners have done in several cases

above Oxford-on-the-Thames; that even if the Lea towing path was public, that fact would not give a right to angle therefrom. However, determined to push affairs to the extreme, a Mr. Goldworthy defied Mr. Benningfield's keeper at Broxbourne, and desired him to do his worst. This resulted in a summons, and the case was tried before a full bench of magistrates at Epping, when private rights were clearly proved, and the defendant was convicted, and mulcted in fine and costs; a decision in the Court of Queen's Bench greatly influencing the bench, to the following effect:—"The public have no right to fish a river made navigable by act of Parliament, but not tidal, although they may have fished it as a right for many years without interruption."

Wanderings in Half-a-Guinea.

BY MAJOR MONK-LAUSEN.

CHAPTER III.—ATAH'S INAMORATA.

HOW illogical are our feelings! A few minutes before, I had been compassing the death of a buffalo—blood was still ebbing from the animal I had shot—and yet I felt the strongest compassion for this member of the same herd, who was folded in the embrace of that terrible serpent, and the deepest hatred for the monster. Snake and man merely obey certain instincts, and there is less excuse for the cruelty of the latter, for he is graminivorous as well as carnivorous, and can exist without flesh.

The keenest sportsman calls a tiger or lion a savage beast, and that with a grave face; and he flatters himself that he has a sense of humour! However, our hatred of reptiles is as natural and intelligible as theirs to us. There was nothing unreasonable in that, if my pity for the victim *was* capricious.

I raised my rifle, but, seeing another of my men running forward, I lowered it again, anxious to observe how the lad would behave. He advanced quite close, this one, to the edge of a shallow pool of water which washed the foot of the tree, and levelling his old flint and steel steadily enough, he gave the huge boa the contents of it right in his head and neck.

The piece was charged with slugs, and the way in which the serpent writhed and stretched itself showed plainly that it was hit. Gradually its folds relaxed, until they became so loosened that the buffalo fell from them, and lay on its side moaning.

The serpent, taking no notice of its late victim, slid into the water, which became tinged with its blood, and glided directly towards its assailants, with its wounded head erect, and hissing fiercely.

It was a horrid sight, seldom experienced out of a nightmare, and I thought no worse of my fellows' courage that they turned and fled from such an apparition. But there was no time to be lost; the boa was gaining on them.

I hurried down from the rocky eminence where I had stood, and hastened in the wake of the reptile. Ponda, who had fired the last shot, and was closely pursued, had the presence of mind to observe my movement, and instead of keeping a straight course he doubled, so as to bring the following serpent closer to me.

By this means, and cutting off a corner, I came upon

the last fold of the creature, just as the head end, a good way in advance, was darting upon Ponda, who had stumbled and fallen. Drawing my hunting knife, I chopped off a foot of the serpent's tail, which tapered to a very fine point. The part thus severed leaped several times high into the air, while the remainder of the enormous length lay writhing and quivering indeed, but powerless for mischief, and paralysed.

Ponda, jumping up, snapped his fingers, gave the reptile a contemptuous kick, and then prostrating himself at my feet, took one of them, kissed it, and placed it on his head. He was aware that I did not yet know his language, so chose this expressive pantomime to testify his admiration and gratitude.

The rest of the party now came up, and Tulu motioned to me whether he should kill the rescued buffalo, which had risen to its feet, but stood still, trembling all over.

I shook my head, and intimated by signs and the few words of Poopooan I had picked up that I had shot one up above; and he started off at once with his three Alfoers to bring in the meat, which was quite as much as we could make use of while it kept sweet.

In the meantime I examined more closely the poor creature which had been seized by the serpent. It was a cow, and therefore of milder disposition than a bull would have been; but still I was astonished at the gentleness to which extreme terror had reduced it.

Anything which was not a boa evidently seemed to her friendly and protecting for the time being, and when I rubbed her nose she turned towards me with a conciliatory moo. Her hide bore the impress of the serpent's folds as plainly as if a cable had been wound round her, and squeezed tight; but none of her ribs appeared to be broken, though the examination caused her to flinch, showing how sore her sides still were.

I talked to her, coaxed her, and at last persuaded her to eat from my hand some fragrant grasses which I gathered; and then, having taken a good drink of water, she lay down to rest.

I then returned to the dead serpent, and showed my desire to have its skin, which was very beautifully marked. Atah looked somewhat puzzled; but on consulting with the others, Tata laughed and nodded, as much as to say that he knew all about it—which, indeed, was very probably the remark he really made.

The first thing done was to drag the reptile to the foot of a large tree, up which one of the men swarmed, and passed a rope over the lower bough; one end was made fast to the creature's neck, and we all hauled at the other till it was hoisted up. Then the one in the tree made it secure, and mounted higher; the operation being repeated until almost the entire length of the serpent, which proved to be fifty feet, hung suspended from the bough, to which the head was firmly lashed. Then the man who had performed this operation came down, and Tata, who had divested himself of every stitch of clothing, clambered up, with his knife in his mouth, and reaching the lofty bough where the serpent hung, passed his legs round the body, dug the knife into the under part of the throat, and let himself slide, ripping the skin with one straight incision as he came down.

The creature must have been without sensation, but a slight muscular action during the operation was as unpleasant to witness as the like phenomenon in eels.

After this, the task of stripping off the skin was rapidly proceeded with, and the flayed carcase was ready for the vultures and ants, who would presently make a splendid skeleton of it.

By the time this was all done, the four men who had been in search of my quarry returned laden with the prime parts of the beef and the marrow bones, and we started back to our bivouac, where I had left Peter Tromp. But directly we made a move the poor cow rose to her feet and moored.

The idea struck me that perhaps she would follow us, and this proved correct; for with a little coaxing she came quite tamely. My fellows wanted to load her with their burdens; but I would not allow that, though it was possible she might be useful in that way hereafter. This afternoon, however, she was too weak and sore; it was as much as she could do to keep up with us without urging, which was also forbidden. I had never heard of a full-grown wild buffalo being domesticated before, and wished to try the experiment fairly, which could only be done by extreme gentleness at the outset.

On approaching the bivouac, I was astonished to see that Peter Tromp had a companion; for in the direction we had taken we did not expect to fall in with any of the inland tribes as yet. When I got nearer, the visitor proved to be a boy, with far handsomer features than is common amongst the Poopooans, and long black hair flowing over his shoulders.

"Oh, milor, how glad I am to see you back!" cried the honest Dutchman, raising his hat and wiping his bald head. "You were so long that I feared some accident had happened to you. And you have brought good store of meat? They have not forgotten the marrow bones? No. What a feast we will have! And I have not been idle. See here."

And he pointed to a large heap of bird of paradise feathers.

"You have been shooting, Peter?"

"Yes; a whole flock of birds of paradise came flying round me. I took good aim, let fly both barrels, and knocked over nearly twenty of them. I thought you would come back hungry, and so prepared a nice little *salmi*. It would not make a very satisfactory dinner, but just for a stay, a trifling *déjeûner*, it may not be unacceptable."

"I should think not," I replied. "With a pannikin of tea it will put fresh life in me, and enable me to rest patiently till the beef is cooked."

"Tea now, yes," said Peter, proudly; "but I have something better to drink for dinner."

"Why, what have you found in this wild place?"

"I have found nothing; but the young fellow you see yonder and I have brewed some excellent palm toddy. But look, milor, there is another buffalo coming, won't you shoot it?"

"By no means," I replied; "that is my tame cow."

"You have tamed a buffalo cow?"

"I and a big serpent, whose skin is yonder, between us."

And I gave him a short account of what had occurred.

"You are certainly and indeed a magician, milor!" exclaimed Peter Tromp. "But this is capital. She is in milk; we will have butter and cheese. Oh, I know how to make them."

By this time I had stretched myself under a tree, and presently my luncheon was served. A *salmi* of birds of paradise! The Romans, who set a high value on a dish of nightingales' tongues, would have appreciated it thoroughly. I confess that I thought it a waste. I would sooner have had the beautiful little birds nicely set up, have sold them in London or Paris to adorn the hats and bonnets of beauty, and purchased ortolans with a portion of the price.

However, the dish was excellently cooked, and most delicious in flavour. Peter and I cleared it in no time. The tea, also, was extremely refreshing, after a hard morning's work on an empty stomach.

"And now, where did you pick up that boy?" I asked, when somewhat revived.

"He came out of the wood soon after you had started this morning," replied Peter; "owned that he had followed us from Howdah, and begged my protection and intercession with you. He wishes to be one of your slaves."

"But he looks very young and delicate; we cannot have any useless hands. Besides, he is probably a runaway, and belongs to some one else."

"Very likely; but that can be easily settled when we return to the coast, if you find him worth keeping. I think he might be handy in camp. Wait till you taste his palm wine."

"It is very strange," said I.

"It would be," replied Peter, with a sly look; "but I doubt whether the boy is a boy at all."

I glanced once more at the object of our conversation, who was sitting modestly a little way off, looking timidly towards us every now and then, and I shared Peter's suspicions.

"But what can induce a girl to engage in so perilous and arduous a journey?" I inquired.

"Love," said Peter. "I rather imagine that she is Mrs. Atah."

"Eh? The rascal never told me he was married."

"Perhaps he considered it a trifle not worth mentioning."

Atah and the mysterious visitor were sent for, and when they met exchanged a look of recognition which testified to the probability of Tromp's conjecture.

And then a romantic story was interpreted to me.

The stranger was indeed a young girl, named Piti, the daughter of the chief of the Krep tribe, which having gone to war with the Kralls, got the worst of it, and lost many of their number in killed and prisoners. Amongst these were the six Alfoers now in my service, and Piti, the chief's daughter, who were sold in a batch to traders from the coast, and brought to Howdow, when Atah saw the girl, and a mutual affection sprung up between them.

The young man endeavoured to purchase her liberty, but being unable to raise the price, had engaged with the owner of the coveted property to pay a large premium, to be defrayed from his wages when I paid him off, if Piti were kept for him until the return of the expedition. But the poor child fretted when her lover left, and, watching her opportunity, disguised herself, and escaped into the forest, through which it was an easy task for her practised eyes to trace our trail.

Atah concluded with an apology for the girl's intrusion, as she was very young, and she did not know better, poor thing; and an entreaty that I would not

send her away, as she would not dare go back for fear of the punishment which would be inflicted upon her for evasion, and would probably perish in the woods.

Piti herself begged to be allowed to remain: she would cook, make toddy, fetch water, eat very little, never knock up, and be generally useful, she declared.

Finally, they both prostrated themselves before me. Quite touched, and at the same time amused by the novel position in which I found myself, I extended my hands over their heads, uttering the usual formula.

I should say, decidedly, that it was the first time that the forest of Half-a-Guinea had resounded with the melodramatic words—

"Bless you, my children!"

I determined that our first beef should furnish a wedding feast, and asked Peter about the marriage ceremonies, which, after a little consultation with the natives, he duly arranged.

They were simple, consisting merely of a division of a roasted banana between the contracting parties, the presentation of a dowry by the father of the bride or some one acting *in loco parentis*, and the consumption of a certain amount of liquor.

The paternal business evidently devolved upon me; so when night had fallen, and the beef was cooked, our whole party gathered round the blazing fire, and a great feast was held.

I presented Piti with a bead necklace and anklets, a clasp knife, a ball of twine, some carpet needles, a powder horn, and a few fish-hooks, which she presented with a pretty grace to Atah. Then drawing my knife, I cut the banana, giving half to each; and when they had eaten it, I filled my pannikin with palm wine, and proposed the health of the bride and bridegroom in a few Poopooan words which I had coached up for the occasion.

The toddy was so good that I almost regretted having burdened myself with the still, and determined it should be one of the first things sacrificed, in case it should ever be necessary to lighten our baggage.

I may be occasionally rough in temper when rubbed the wrong way, but give me a pipe of tobacco and a bowl of palm toddy after a full meal, and a child might play with me.

But our comedy nearly turned to tragedy. Some of the smaller sticks had fallen from the fire, and lay round the edge of it, as is always the case. Piti, who sat next to me, her husband being on the other side, kept shyly kicking these back into the flame with her naked little foot, while the health drinking was going on.

As she was about to repeat this trick, I perceived that the apparent twig she was in the act of kicking was a snake, about a yard long, that was stretched out basking in the heat of the fire.

Remembering an African trick, which was as likely to be effective in Half-a-Guinea as in Whole, quick as thought, I grasped the reptile by the tail, and flicked it as you would a whip when you want to crack it, so breaking its backbone in several places, and rendering it powerless to curl up or dart. Then, holding it at arm's length, I quietly dropped it into the hottest part of the blaze, where it frizzled up, and was consumed in a moment.

This episode was very effective, for the snake was of the most deadly character; and had the bride

touched it and been bitten, no human art could have kept her alive more than a quarter of an hour. It also naturally added to the feeling of sympathy that the six Kreps had for her as the daughter of their head man; and, altogether, what with taking her under my protection, and marrying her to Atah, and saving her so dexterously from the snake, I could not have excited more popularity, or won the respect of my people to a greater degree by any premeditated course of conduct.

The supply of palm toddy soon failing, and a wedding feast being always a convivial occasion, I took about a quart from the brandy keg, and as lemons, nutmegs, and cloves grew on the trees around, and we had some honey, I brewed a kettle of punch—very weak, for Poopooan heads are not like those of northern people—and left the party to make a night of it.

For myself, I retired early, but was kept awake for hours by the chants which came from the fire, one of which Peter Tromp, who soon followed me, translated for my benefit. Indeed, it was in my praise, and ran somewhat thus:—

"Milor is great and powerful,
He is generous and brave;
The buffalo comes to him, and says, eat me,
Those who serve milor will never be hungry.
He cuts off the tails of the big snakes;
He takes the little snakes in his hands and cracks them."

On the following day we halted, to give Peter Tromp a good opportunity of preparing the snake skin, which it was my ambition to see in the British Museum some day. Piti attended to the cooking, which was some relief to me, as I did not much like seeing the enterprising Dutchman running backwards and forwards from his arsenical preparations to the gipsy kettle. He might make some confusion in the respective ingredients.

Shortly after breakfast I saw Coger, one of the Alfoers, going through a most singular performance: balancing himself lightly on the fore-part of the left foot, he kept jerking out the right leg in all directions, and to the height of his shoulder, in a manner which would not have disgraced Bullier's or the Mabile.

As the brandy keg was his particular charge, I suspected that he had been taking a hair of the dog that bit him the night before, but was told on inquiry no—he had been bitten by the funny spider, as a species of tarantula is here called.

This curious insect, if its web is destroyed, or it is otherwise angered, will watch its opportunity, like a clever Skye terrier, and nip the offender in the calf of the leg. The effect is most ludicrous, for the bitten person cannot help performing the hilarious movements above described, while his face all the while wears an expression of extreme anger and annoyance.

At first, indeed, I feared for the man's safety, as I had heard that there were several descriptions of spiders in the country whose bite was deadly; but on being assured that the paroxysm would pass off in about half an hour, leaving no ill effects beyond the prostration caused by such violent exercise in a temperature equalling that of the Victoria Regia house at Kew, I could not refrain from laughter. I thought I would try what my mesmeric powers would effect for his relief, and, with a few passes, I caused the agitated

limb to relax into its normal state, while the man uttered a sigh of relief, and sank in a deep sleep to the ground.

The effect upon the rest of my people was great; they looked upon me as a more powerful fetish than ever.

The next day we started afresh; and as our cow, who had recovered from her fright, as well as from the other effects of her squeeze, remained very tame, I had her laden with some of the most cumbersome of our goods, and Piti taking charge of her, we penetrated farther into the forest.

After the midday rest, I took Tulu, who carried my second gun, the single small-bore, and went out to shoot something for dinner.

I was not successful in seeing any large game at first, but coming to a park-like tract, where the big trees were farther apart than usual, I perceived something in the distance bounding towards me with surprising jumps.

It was, I imagined, a sort of kangaroo, but smaller in body and longer in the hind legs, and thicker in the tail than the Australian species. At about a thousand yards off it stopped, and was hidden in the brushwood.

Fearing I should get no nearer chance, I took the small-bore rifle from Tulu, and waited. After a while the kangaroo bounded up again from right to left, and I took a snap shot, about fifteen yards in front of it, to allow for the extreme celerity of its flight.

It seemed impossible to hit it under the circumstances; but judge my astonishment when the creature spun round, heels over head, through the air for a considerable distance, and then dropped in a heap.

To pace the distance was impossible, because of the thick underwood; but it was a long shot, and I must confess that its success was somewhat of a fluke. The bullet had passed completely through the kangaroo's heart, and we found it quite dead. I was deceived in my first idea of its size, for it was more than we could do to drag it to the bivouac, which was not far off, unassisted; and Tulu had to go and fetch help, while I kept off the vultures. The venison was excellent.

That night I was roused from a sound sleep by a terrible growling and roaring close by, and jumping up, rifle in hand, I found my men in a state of great excitement, with firebrands in their hands, striving to drive away a moolah which had designs on our buffalo.

In adding this cow to our party, I had reckoned without this large and ferocious species of tiger, who would sure to be attracted by the beef; and my men, thinking that the wild beast would not dare to approach our bivouac fire, had tethered her close by, to prevent her wandering into danger.

The moolah, however, was bolder than had been reckoned upon; and though the glare of the burning sticks scared him away for a time, we heard him growling low in the neighbourhood, and knew that he would return when we settled to rest again.

To post a second sentry over the one buffalo was not to be thought of with our small party, so I hit upon a device for her protection which might obviate this difficulty. As the moolah will not approach too close to anything of fire, I rubbed the cow's horns with phosphorus, so that in the dark they presented the appearance of two curves of flame, which might well strike terror into the breast of any wild beast. For, when

attacked, the buffalo would naturally offer her head, with its fierce horns, to the enemy.

This done, all retired by my orders to await the success of the experiment.

It was complete. The wild beast presently returned, but, on the cow preparing to receive tigers, fled away again with a prolonged howl, and that danger was for the future avoided. Of a supply of phosphorus I had no fear of falling short, as I can easily make it with bones and sulphuric acid. My men thought me a greater fetish than ever.

The knowledge that moolahs were in the neighbourhood caused me to take precautions when we started on the march next morning; and we advanced through the forest in extended order. I carried a large whistle, with which I directed the movements of the band, who had been drilled to conform to them. One whistle meant halt; two, advance; three, climb up trees and look out for danger. More than this I did not attempt, for fear of confusion and mistake.

Piti and the cow, who now carried a good load, followed in rear of Atah and his men. Peter Tromp kept with me. Presently the latter said—

"What can it be glittering so in that bush?"

And looking in the direction pointed out, I saw two points of light gleaming through the leaves, like diamonds in a sunbeam. On advancing to investigate the phenomenon, however, I saw them blink, and knew that they were eyes. I had just time to cock my hammers and call "Look out!" when a splendid animal of the tiger species sprang out, and bounded towards our rear, receiving both my barrels as he topped a large shrub.

Both bullets told, for I heard the thud-thud as they struck his hide, but they failed to bring him down.

Hastily reloading, I followed the track, which was plainly marked in blood, with caution, expecting to come upon the wounded brute every moment; but a shriek, a cry, and another shot hastened my steps, and, pushing my way with some difficulty through the brushwood, I reached the entrance to a glade, where a sad sight met my view.

Piti lay stretched on the ground, motionless, no doubt lifeless, while close to her body a terrific combat was going on between Atah and the moolah. The former, having discharged his piece, had no weapon but his knife. It was teeth and claws *versus* cold steel, with any odds on the former.

I raised my rifle, and tried to get a shot, but any one of my readers who has been in a similar situation will understand the difficulty.

I can break an egg with a bullet between a man's finger and thumb at three hundred yards, if he will only remain perfectly motionless, but that was just the condition which was now wanting. When I covered the moolah's head, that of Atah came in the way; and when I had drawn a true bead on the beast's shoulder, and was just about to press the trigger, the man's armed right hand dashed across the identical spot.

A WELL-KNOWN editor of a morning paper inquired of a certain alderman one day what he thought of his journal. "I like it all," said the alderman, "but its broken English." The editor started, and asked for an explanation. "Why, the list of bankrupts, to be sure."

Mems. on Members.

WHILE Serjeant Spinks
 Takes forty winks,
 The Great O'Gorman sits and blinks;
 And Dundee Ginx
 Says what he thinks,
 As Lowe doth muse on wheels and rinks.
 Mundella stalks,
 And Balfour talks,
 Ward Hunt the leaking navy caulks;
 A line Booth chalks
 As Goschen balks,
 While Three-way Will his last course walks.
 Anderson snubs,
 And sly Monk rubs
 The Government, and Dizzy snubs;
 Lawson hates pubs
 And all ale tubs;
 And Raikes, the House "the chairman" dubs.
 The Parnell jeers
 As Callan sneers,
 And Noel moves the House to tears;
 Sir Bowyer veers,
 Peel danger nears,
 And Hartington his party steers.
 "Ho, peace!" cries Bright.
 Looks Percy spite;
 And Lewis beams o'er waistcoat white.
 "Halt! by your right;
 Our war dogs bite,"
 Cries Hardy. Pease says, "Hold them tight!"
 John Holker hems!
 The tide he stems,
 And floods the House with legal gems;
 While, in his mems.,
 Giffard condemns
 The place he can't get in—on Thames.
 Cries Mr. Butt—
 "Take off yer fut
 From Oirland's neck;" while Plunket stut-
 ters ere he'll shut
 Up those who'd cut
 Erin adrift with Home Rule. Tut!
 Then comes Charles Dilke,
 Some sham to bilk,
 Helped by a Goldsmid of that ilk;
 Till, soft as silk,
 Sir Northcott's milk
 Flows like a riv'let from a hill'k.
 Now Plimsoll pecks,
 And talks of wrecks;
 Stanhope and Adderley crane their necks;
 "Our tars you vex!"
 Cries Williams. "Lex!"
 And Eslington he waves his specs.
 Old Cavendish
 Looks bosunish,
 And gives the navy "Pooh!" and "Pish!"
 As Winn—odd fish—
 His whip will swish,
 And for majorities does wish.

Cries Dyke, "New writ!"
 Beach, "Wait a bit!"
 When Erin 'gins to scold and spit;
 Hamilton's grit
 Was born *non fit*,
 And Bentinck sharpens up his wit.
 "Commons," says Cross,
 "I've won the toss;"
 And Fawcett: "Oh, the public loss!"
 Macdonald: "Boss!"
 I say, old hoss,
 Here goes to give the Guvment goss."
 Meldon will scold,
 And Biggar hold
 His own where wisdom turns to mould;
 Till Nolan bold,
 His story's told;
 And Ward and Power wrongs unfold.
 Then Newdegate—
 Great legislate!—
 Pumps slowly forth his speech ornate;
 Till, sure as fate,
 Whalley, irate,
 Pours Jesuit on each member's pate.
 Now Viscount Sandon:
 "Little boys, stand on
 The form, and old forms now abandon."
 Cries Forster, "Man, done!
 Rocks you'll land on,"
 In voice as sweet as bells of Shandon.
 Lennox: "The purks
 And public works
 Are perfect." Then come words of Bourke's—
 "Oh, yes! the Turks,
 With swords and dirks,
 Do slay the Serbs, while Russia smirks."
 Then Ryland axes
 About the taxes,
 Till wrathful all the Treasury waxes;
 And Harcourt smacks his
 Lips, and racks his
 Brains, and hatches fresh attacks-es.
 That Scottish rusk,
 Sir Andrew Lusk,
 Who'd better be dancing Money Musk,
 Sticks in his tusk
 To the British fusc-
 al dealings here this side the Usk.
 With a wriggle eely,
 Next comes Kenealy;
 And Henry James, with a smile that's steely.
 Mr. Hubbard mealy;
 And Gorst so leal, he
 Speaks better far than a Wyndham vealy.
 Then Bedford Pim—
 Well, what of him?
 And the man who holds his hat by the rim—
 Beresford, slim
 As a Puritan prim,
 Lights both with a habit of burning dim.

The solemn Boord
Has to be endured,
When away from his spinning gin allured,
To a house assured
Of a drink well cured,
When by Hanbury, Whitbread, and Bass it's
brewered.

There is a Massey—
Not sounding like Brassey,
A doleful, heavy sound that is bassy—
For two hours, alas! he
Will speak, till the gas he
Was full of evaporates. Lor' ha' massy!

Fraser: propriety,
Dwells on society,
Backed up by Yorke, and, by way of variety,
Elcho: notoriety,
Volunteerety,
Kilted instead of a trousered satiety.

Manners for mails,
Greene for his ales;
And Forsyth, whose bill for the feminines stales;
Walpole of park pales,
John Hay of the gales,
And Lorne, who peeps over the gallery rails.

Then Osborne Morgan,
With his dulcet organ,
Plays "Bury me, do," to those grim as a Gorgon.
While Macs and O's loregone,
With failure foregone,
Foreseeing inischief, have from each door gone.

Lubbock sainted,
And S. Morley tainted
With the goodness oft in a window painted;
And members acquainted
With the bar, who plained
With speeches lengthy till the House has fainted.

It's rather weary
To hear O'Leary,
The giant; and devil a bit o' fear he
Shows, as with jeer he
Makes the House dreary:
Better far Moore—not him of Peri.

Young Hubbard meek
Doth seldom speak;
The veteran Admiral fans his cheek;
Lord Gordon's squeak
Is rather weak,
The peaceful Stansfeld eats his leek.

Burt makes a stir—
If he would not burr!—
But like Cowper-Temple, so gently purr;
Or like Russell Gur-
ney, mild as a her,
Whose voice sounds sweet as a soft mur-mur.

Smyth: Sunday close
To success goes,
With much support from the Liberal rows;
When Ramsay flows
Maclaren glows,
And Father Henley mildly "Ohs!"

Adam with thong,
Wheelhouse with strong
Love for rejecting a measure wrong;
Cameron long,
Law like a gong,
Lowther with news from the Cape to Hong-Kong.

In time of need
Is there not a Reed
To lean on for ships if Ward runs to seed?
Mackenna for speed,
Henry follows his lead,
As Sullivan seizes each Irish weed.

But from these six hundred
And odd, who've blundered,
For the present the bard must be sadly Sundered;
Since the editor wondered—
"May I be dundered!"
And "Stop, vile scribbler!" he sternly thundered.

The Egotist's Note-book.

I SOME years ago wrote a sketch, after going over the ruins of a factory where a boiler had burst—tearing the building to pieces, and slaying the workpeople wholesale. The sketch was called "Query, Rivets." Since then, I have hundreds of times seen such descriptions as the following:—"The whole of the starboard foremast boiler in the after stoke-hole had been blown out, and the iron separated at the rivets all round." This is from the account of the *Thunderer* explosion, and it is always the same tale—the iron separated at the rivets all round, just as I saw it at the accident I described. Take a sheet of paper, and it is tolerably strong; perforate it as you do postage stamps, and its strength is gone. So it is with the iron plates of which boilers are composed: they are perforated for rivets and joined at the edges; and here in every explosion they are torn off. The making of steam boilers is radically wrong. "How would you make them, then?" some one asks. That is not my business. Find a better way. Surely, in these engineering days, a better way might be found. As boilers are, they are so many land torpedoes, only waiting their turn to burst.

A writer in the *Indian Public Opinion* describes a very singular and unusual sight he witnessed at Shanghai. Walking Shanghai-wards from the Pagoda, he met a sort of caravan consisting of sixty horsemen, three of whom were dressed in scarlet, followed by certainly no fewer than two hundred men on foot. These men were walking with their arms stretched out to the fullest extent, while, attached by wire hooks passing through the flesh, were heavy leaden censers full of incense, and baskets of flowers. The weight of these things was apparently enormous; and although the men's arms were supported by poles placed in a horizontal position to their bodies, the flesh in many instances had commenced to "give" and tear away. There were many tablets being carried at intervals among the procession, besides two Josses—one in a large ornamented chair—numerous flags, and three bands of music. Between the horsemen and the two hundred marched about thirty men, bearing vessels of incense in their hands, who, every five steps, indulged

in an eccentric gyration and sweeping curtesy, most peculiar to behold. Now this was evidently the procession of a society, a branch of which exists in the city—not a secret society, however, be it observed—known as the Ch'en-huang P'u-sa, a deity who presides in a very special manner over the fortunes of departed souls. The laceration indulged in by his votaries has for its object the propitiation of the god, and probably every man who composed the procession, which seems to have astonished our correspondent so much, had some particular request that he was anxious should be granted. The Ch'en-huang P'u-sa appears to have unlimited power to dispense favours, to cure diseases, and procure long life and other blessings for his worshippers and their parents.

Mr. Fawcett made a remark the other day in the House which sounded strangely as coming from him, and caused almost a jar to the nerves of those who heard it. He said, when speaking in committee on the Education Bill, "In looking over the paper." Mr. Fawcett is quite blind; though, to watch him when speaking, it is the last thing that any one would imagine.

That unsavoury subject, the Contagious Diseases Act, has been again before the House, and previous to the debate Mr. Mitchell Henry and Mr. Callan very properly took steps to try and get the ladies' gallery cleared. They failed, however; and seven persons of the stronger-minded sex remained there through the debate!!! Rumour says that the applications by the strong-minded for admission that day were like a flood.

Mr. E. Ransford, the bass singer, has passed away, at a reasonably fair old age. He was a bluff, genial, hearty man, and no greater treat could be had than to hear him sing our national sea songs, notably "Tom Tough," the words of which—

"So in Providence I trust,
For, you see, what must be must,"

seem to ring in my ears as he last sang them—words that seem most applicable now.

Here is a curious specimen of advertising. It looks uncommonly like trade, but we are bound to suppose that it is love:—

FLORENCE.—The last chance you will have of seeing R. T. before joining the Servian army will be on the Moonlight Boat on Saturday.—(See advertisement.)

The notice appeared in the *Daily News*, and Florence kindly replied a day or two later. Well, it is to be hoped that there was moonlight down the river on Saturday, and if R. T. goes to the Servian army, may no bullet make him a billet.

Dr. G. F. Macdonald writes to a daily paper that "the heat is so intense that deaths from the effects of sunstroke are reported almost daily. If out-door labourers would put fern, turnip, or cabbage leaves inside their hats, or wind bands of rushes, vetches, or green herbage of some sort around them, there would be fewer cases of sunstroke. By this means, the heat is not only greatly lessened, but actually becomes grate-

ful, when strained through herbaceous substances." This, no doubt, is very true; but nothing to be compared to the time when "strained through herbaceous substances," especially if the cool be iced cup, and the herbaceous substance borage, with a dash of the cucumber known as cu.

Mr. Henley said a good thing in the House the other day on the debate in committee on the Education Bill. He said that teaching was one thing, but the duty—he was not sure it was not the first duty—of parents was to feed their children.

I have just been looking through a pamphlet entitled "Mr. Lockyer's Logic," by William Carpenter. It is one of the series published by this gentleman to prove that the world is flat instead of round, principally by narrow-minded carpings at the writings and demonstrations of able scientific men. After a careful perusal, one does not arrive at the conclusion that the world is flat instead of round, but that this is the case with Mr. Carpenter's head.

A very singular step has been taken by the proprietors of one of the principal hotels in Bombay. In a revised tariff of prices the daily charge for a single lady or gentleman is set down as five rupees, but if the lady or gentleman—or perhaps we ought to say if the lady and gentleman—be married, then the charge will be seven rupees each. No explanation of this portentous regulation is vouchsafed. The extra charge is apparently a blow aimed at the married state, a fine levied upon matrimony. The "marriage lines" which nearly cost the Colleen Bawn her life will in Bombay cost husband and wife a heavy addition in their hotel bill.

The annual tea race has taken place, I see, and the *Glenortney* has arrived in twenty-one days from Wongsung. Now, something is said about the race not always being to the swift or strong. Surely it is, though, here in regard to this tea from China. One wonders how many spoonfuls go to the pot. As, however, this is the strongest tea of the year, it would be wise to secure some, even if it were only a homely quarter-pound.

As Mr. Ripley and Sir George Bowyer have been crossed off the books of the Reform Club, how is it that steps are not taken by political committees elsewhere—say at the Carlton Club, of which he is a member—against Lord Robert Montagu, who has gradually edged round from the Conservative benches, after a course of Home Rule, and finally takes his seat in the House exactly behind the leader of the Opposition?

WE have worn a pair of Mr. W. J. Almond's new Patent Stocking Suspenders for over a month, and shall never think of wearing garters again on any account. The stocking is kept up just as well as with a garter, perhaps better; and certainly it is more easy and comfortable, and, doctors say, much more beneficial, especially for those who suffer from varicose veins. Mr. Almond informs us that they may be had of any first-class hosier or draper in the kingdom, or he would send them by post for 2d. extra from his address, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Price—Children's, 1s. 6d.; Young Ladies', 2s.; Ladies', 3s.

Rings and Ringlets.

I HAVE seen a good many circuses in my time, including the ring of the great Ducrow at Astley's, where Gomersal and Widdicombe used to strut in Napoleon boots, cracking whips with tremendous thongs, and entering into smart conversation with the clowns, whom they always addressed as "Sir," ending by getting the worst of it in the verbal war.

I was at Astley's on the night when Madame Ducrow, who rode as "Miss Woolford," pitched head first off her horse on to the sawdust, and sent her spiked tiara into her hair. She was "not hurt in the least," so we were assured directly afterwards—equestrian performers never are, by the way, even when they go limping off to their dressing-room or the canvas lean-to of a country tent.

My fealty was good to Astley's in the days of Batty and his successors, for I have often sworn by Sanger and his "troop of highly-trained steeds," and now lament most piteously that the hallowed sawdust, so beautifully raked and made into patterns like a carpet, should have had to descend to rinking—the mania of the day.

With such a love for the scenes in the circle, it naturally follows that in a long provincial career I should have seen plenty of the ephemeral circuses that roamed the country—Wallett's, and Cook's, and Clarke's, and the rest, whose name has been legion. Did they not all come into town at one o'clock with a glorious procession of knights in armour, gorgeously dight, like the fair ladies at their side? And was there not an allegorical band-car—you must have an allegorical band-car, or you are nowhere—with a band of the brassiest instruments, which played allegories till the market-place re-echoed?

Those are pleasant circus memories, and so are those of the little maiden with blonde hair whom I took to see the wonders of Batty's hippodrome at Kensington in 1851, when in the chariot races one noble Roman centurion's horse broke away, stood still, and the following pair, driven by another noble Roman centurion, in a helmet two sizes too large for him, to the hindrance of his vision, galloped over the first horse, spun the chariot top over wheels, and sent the noble centurion aforesaid spinning such a somersault as I have never seen in any circus since. He got up, and went off limping. But he, too, was not hurt, bless you, not a bit.

By the way, I am not sure that the above gentlemen were centurions—they might have been commanders of cohorts, phalanxes, or legions; but I am certain that they all—there were three—wore short petticoats, had whips like hay carters, and cried "On, horse!" to the pairs they drove.

Now, with the memories of so many hippodramatic glories freshly recalled to mind, being a firm believer in Hengler, Sanger, and the centaurs of the classic age of my youth and prime, I must confess that I went down to the Crystal Palace, a day or two since, in a *blasé*, sceptical mood, mentally crying, like the old playgoer, "Ah, you should have seen the circuses of my time!" But like the sailors in the old recitation, "who went in sinners and came out converted," so did I, and am now ready to declare that Myers's hippodrome goes by contraries—the very reverse of the ordinary display of horsemanship, inasmuch as it far eclipses in reality

anything that it professes to show by its pictorial placards on the walls.

As the public is to a great extent ignorant of the magnitude of the establishment now domiciled at the Crystal Palace, let me as a judge—a modest judge—tell them what I have seen.

To begin with, then, I placed myself under the guidance of a cicerone, and, passing down a staircase, went out on to the upper terrace, which has been joined at either end by a sloping curve to the lower terrace, the two forming a grand elliptical racecourse, or parade-ground, utilized by jockeys who race with four horses, each standing on the back of one of the quartette; and also for a grand procession or cavalcade. Here, at the bottom of a flight of steps, I was introduced to, not the horses, but the stable of the elephants.

Two of these great, calm, pig-eyed creatures were regular monsters. Along with them were six others of a small size. They were all studying the qualities of hay, which they formed into small trusses with their trunks, and then swallowed, with a calm gravity that was most striking, especially as all the time you felt bound to believe they were doing it in fun.

But this was not part of their performance, for we followed them as they were ordered out by a groom, and then, softly, silently, and with yielding india-rubber feet, they all went out, quite as a matter of course, and in a little drove ascended the stone steps, and, to quote the homely old nigger song, made before Christy the Minstrel was born, "Sich a gittin' up stairs I never did see!" Then trudging along the upper terrace, they made their way as solemnly and sedately as so many Dutch burghers into the great circus formed at the foot of the Handel orchestra.

The great feature of the entertainment is the performance of John Cooper with these eight elephants. Six of these little punchy fellows—animals of four or five years old, apparently—first make their appearance, shambling stolidly, like so much dirty india-rubber, into the circus; trumpeting shrilly, and then lie down, sit down, stand on their hind legs, or on their heads on tubs; roll the said tubs about; form themselves into statuesque groups, dance—one tubby-looking young lady waltzing round the circus with a sedate aspect that is most comical.

The peculiarity of the performance is that the intelligent beasts seem to know so perfectly well the routine through which they have to go, and perform their parts quite as a matter of course, apparently undirected save here and there. Their work done, the little drove of six shamle off again in their soft, quiet way, disappearing through an avenue of spectators, and it seems that the promised eight are only six; but directly after, looming up above the people, appear the great dark grey backs of a couple of monsters, some ten feet high, who march into the ring, sound their war notes, which resemble a cracked clarion badly blown, and then, at a touch from John Cooper's whip, prove themselves as clever and as tractable as their young friends, who, by the way, are, like the elder, Indian elephants, the single African specimen being easily distinguished by its great flapping ears.

It is surprising to see the care with which the two monsters—each of whom weighs about four tons—go through their performance, being obedience itself, even to suffering their trainer to place his head in one of their

mouths and closing the proboscis and lips over it, as a child would over a cherry, one of them finally stalking off—the work done—with John Cooper held in its twisted trunk.

This exhibition alone would be worth a visit to see. These great beasts are all tethered in a temporary stable below the first terrace, up the steps of which they go in a drove, and trudge to and from the Palace with all the quiet docility of so many sheep. They are dangerous though, after all, for one of the large ones has the unenviable character of having killed about a dozen men. This does not, however, proceed from a vicious disposition, but from her affectionate ways. One man she killed as he leaned against a post by giving herself a loving rub against him, pressing the poor fellow to death; and when it is remembered that the ponderous brute weighs some four tons or so, this is not a matter of surprise, as four tons' weight of affectionate pressure proves fatal.

So much for the elephants, which draw and push a carriage of monstrous size in the procession, with Britannia on the top. The horses are in a grand range of stabling formed for them in what answers to a continuation of the carriage department of the Palace.

And here a word must be said about Mr. Myers's carriages, which were stationed by the north water tower, close to where the huge circus tent is erected to hold four thousand persons. These carriages and triumphal cars are a blaze of gilding and silvering, and panelled with looking-glass, and lined in the most sumptuous manner, so as to form no mean addition to the great processions which parade the terraces.

But to return to the stabling. There was a decent-looking, smartly dressed groom at the door; and then, seeing another and another of quite the same stamp of the stud or pad groom of a nobleman's establishment, I was under the impression that I was in the wrong place; but the sight of a regular piebald circus horse brought my familiar cynical smile to my lips.

"Ah, the old thing," I said to myself—"piebald, skewbald, and cream."

And I was right—it was the old style, so far; but the next moment I mentally took off my hat to Mr. Myers and his stud, for I found myself in a long range of stabling, containing not the dozen or two of regular circus horses, but a magnificent collection of animals, some two hundred and fifty in number, and the peculiarly marked horses of the conventional type, with their ugly, light-coloured eyes, were only a few compared to the others.

These former were splendid creatures, in admirable condition, as shown by their glistening satin coats. Here were horses of the genuine Arab descent, beautiful animals, with attractively formed heads, large eyes, *retroussé* noses, and wild-looking, flowing manes and tails, slim-legged, large round-hoofed, and with a network of veins standing out in arched neck and flank; seven magnificent black Prussian horses from the Emperor of Germany's breeding stables at Trakhene—beautiful creatures, of which a prince might be proud; and though fiery, docile and obedient as children, as they afterwards showed themselves in the ring. Bays, full of fine points; chestnuts that would honour Hyde Park; and greys, with black manes and tails, that sent one away envious. Farther on were a score of diminutive ponies; and, close by, the harness-room, with its grand

display of brass, gilt, and silver trappings for the horses.

The whole of the stable arrangements are of a colossal character, and the cleanliness and order remarkable.

One can only glance at the camels, which run races round the course at a very slow rate, and name the cage of lions—iron-plated, iron-barred, and strong—creatures which John Cooper has subjected, and some of which beasts were presents from King Victor Emmanuel.

In the ring, the performances—though many of them resemble such as have been seen before—are for the most part more quickly done, more daring, and are gone through with greater skill. The artistes take higher leaps over banners and through balloons; there are more barebacked horses used; the Japanese tumblers are more elastic, and go through feats that are more quaintly curious than one has before seen.

The Arab tumblers, too, spin, leap, tumble, and juggle themselves about in a way that almost startles the beholder, from the peculiarity of the contortions, and the wonderful muscular strength displayed; so that when half a dozen are spinning at once like centrifugal tops, with their bodies at an angle of forty-five degrees, the beholder's eyes seem to get their visual rays tied in a knot, and he closes them for relief.

One cannot here dwell upon the feats of Mrs. Myers, nor the daring riding of Madame Nyegaard; on Mr. James Madigan's double somersaults, during which he seems to be a big india-rubber ball; nor yet upon the horse-training of Mr. Charles Madigan; but one cannot close without a few words about the performing dogs, which are remarkably clever, and those far more humorous dogs—the clowns. Of these a band of nine dash into the circus at once; but the most laughable are the three Hulines, two of whom perform feats with half a dozen conical felt hats, which are thrown, caught, and re-thrown in an absurdly droll manner that would prove a panacea for the most dyspeptic dyspeptic in the world. Their performance is alone worth a trip to the Palace to see.

Therefore, old, *blasé*, and believing that I had seen all that was to be seen, I openly and boldly declare that I shall go again to see races, processions, lion-taming, and scenes in the circus; for accounts of which, as the professional getter-up of advertisements says, "See small bills!"

MERCURIAL woman, what pains you avoid!

You are mobile, and so, 'mid life's stings,
Blows fall, and you yield, passing on unalloyed,
As a bird saves itself by its wings.

LOVE—and spite it—
Failure, elf.
Cease to fight, it
Cures itself.

AN absent-minded professor, in going out of the gateway of his college, ran against a cow. In the confusion of the moment, he raised his hat and exclaimed, "I beg your pardon, madam." Soon after he stumbled against a lady in the street. In a sudden recollection of his former mishap, he called out, with a look of rage in his countenance, "Is that you again, you brute?"

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER XXVI.—A TRUCE.

THE next instant Agnew was behind Marco, grasping the latter's upraised arm with both his hands, as in a vice; while Harcourt recoiled a step at a sight of the danger which had threatened him.

In the moment of exasperation Marco had drawn from a belt about his waist a long, thin blade, which now glistened in the sunshine, powerless in his grasp. Practically disarmed by the unexpected adversary from behind, he suffered himself to remain in his helpless position for a second or so—grinding his teeth in impotent rage; then, with a sudden snatch, released the knife, and replaced it in his belt, glowering sulkily as he did so.

"Come, come," cried Agnew, "this is beyond a joke. Anything you will in fair fight; but no murder. The old house has a bad enough name without that. Besides, what folly all this is. Can we afford to be foes?"

A sullen growl from Marco was his response.

Harcourt, who with all his faults had some generous impulses, held out his hand.

"I was to blame," he said; "I began it."

Marco took the proffered hand, not cordially, but as if it were some curious and rather offensive object presented for his inspection, and said, but without alacrity—

"The blame was mine also; I called you what no man should call another, whatever his opinion. Enough—we are friends."

On this understanding they resumed their seats, but with no great cordiality or warmth of feeling. Plain truths had been spoken, and truth cuts deeper than wit. Besides, there was in Marco an assumption of importance, not to say an insolent assumption, unusual with him, and therefore offensive on two grounds. First, it awoke suspicion, since in a man of his nature such a change could hardly have come about without a cause; and secondly, it was irritating to one accustomed to find in the Italian nothing but the most abject servility.

Seeing how matters stood, Randolph Agnew sought to turn the conversation into a fresh channel, and with the happy audacity and unreasoning egotism of youth, plunged at once, and most unseasonably, into the topic uppermost in his thoughts.

"Thank goodness your bickering is over, you two," he said, as he leaned with both elbows on the table between them. "There's some hope now of a fellow getting in a word. And I want to say half a dozen words, Marco, about a subject that must interest you."

"What is that?" Marco asked, unwillingly.

"Your daughter."

"What!"

He was keen enough now—all eyes, all ears.

"Yes," Randolph proceeded, with easy nonchalance, his rosy chin resting in the cup formed by his upward palms. "You know Zerina and I were old flames. At first Edmund here was her favourite."

Marco gave a sharp, curious glance at the face of his late adversary at this allusion.

"But that wore off," the other continued, not heeding, or not understanding the look; "and Zerina had

always a bright face and a welcoming word for me. I won't pretend to say I didn't feel this. Young fellows like this sort of thing; it flatters their vanity, especially from a pretty girl, and she is pretty—"

"You think so?" said Marco, sarcastically.

"Can there be a doubt of it—eh, Edmund?" the lad inquired, in perfect good faith.

"Eh?" retorted Harcourt. "Pretty, yes. A devilish deal too pretty, I should say."

Again that curiously inquiring look in Marco's eyes. For what did he watch? What doubt did he seek to satisfy, what impression to confirm? Happily, the other was unconscious of his scrutiny, or the feud so lately raging might have broken out anew.

"Suppose we take my daughter's good looks as a settled point," Marco said; "and to what may all this lead?"

"It leads simply to this," replied Agnew; "the girl's young, pretty, innocent, and altogether attractive. You know this as well as I can tell you, and I suppose you also know the people at whose place she is staying?"

"I know them well."

"Then I need not ask whether they are safe people—safe, I mean, to have charge of such a child?"

"No," said Marco, "you need not ask. They are safe. But why, why this sudden interest in my poor affairs? What does it mean?"

"It means," returned the youth, impetuously, "that I last night saw Zerina leave the Opera-house with one of the most disreputable fellows in town."

"Indeed!"

"Not a low cad—on the contrary, an aristocrat, with all but royal blood in his veins; but for all that a sensual, heartless, depraved wretch—a disgrace to our common humanity."

Marco raised both his hands in affected horror, but only smiled.

"Is it possible?" he demanded. "Possible, I mean, that our dear Randolph can so far have lost his head—or his heart—as to go into heroics like this! You thought I should be alarmed? Not in the least, I assure you. I have outgrown my faith in demons in human form, and I have every faith in my friends and in my daughter."

"But I assure you—"

"And I refuse to take your assurance."

"But you may be deceived."

"And then? Well, I must take the consequences."

"Of course; but Zerina?"

Edmund Harcourt impatiently interposed.

"Hang it, Randolph," he said, "what is it to you? A man would think you were spoons on the girl yourself, and were ready to make her your wife, to save her from the clutches of this dragon in small-clothes—this, this, what is he? Who is he?"

Randolph took a card from his pocket, and threw it across the table.

"Read," he said.

Harcourt glanced at the card, and his lips gave faintly audible utterance to the name inscribed on it—"Colonel Duplex."

"The devil!" he exclaimed, his face changing, and his whole frame quivering with a spasmodic movement.

"My very words," cried Randolph, "as I saw Zerina leaning affectionately on his arm. You see, you see,

Marco, I was not so far out in my reckoning. By Jove! rather than see the girl fall a victim to that monster, I would do what Edmund has said—I would make her my wife!"

Marco sprang up, and pressing the palms of both hands together over his breast, made a deep and profound salaam.

"Pardon me," he said between his teeth, "if I am so overwhelmed with the honour that I fail to express myself as I might. But the condescension is too great. The intended honour is too overpowering. I must be excused if I seek vent for my agitated feelings in—laughter."

And he burst into a fierce guffaw.

The two men looked at him with mixed feelings of anger and amazement. Why this change in the man? What had come to him, and what did it portend? They were totally at a loss to understand; but then they did not realize, as Marco did, that this was "the falling out of thieves;" that a breach had—purposely on his part—been that day made which would only widen and widen, and must be attended with startling results to at least one of them.

And to many honester men elsewhere.

CHAPTER XXVII.—"THE EXILE'S BRIDE."

AN hour later Edmund Harcourt quitted the old house alone; perhaps in order that his friend might have the opportunity of renewing a suit by no means favourable in its beginning; perhaps because he wished to indulge the sullenly melancholy thoughts natural to his by no means enviable position.

Making at once for the river, he looked about for old Jacob and the ferry-boat, by means of which he usually came and went (probably to cut off all traces of his coming and going, rather than from any business which took him on the Surrey side of the water); but in place of the old man, his boy Joe bustled up with suspicious alacrity.

"Row you over, sir?" he asked, touching his greasy cap.

"Where's Jacob?" the other demanded, instead of answering the question.

The boy's huge mouth extended with a grin from ear to ear.

"Oh, the old gen'l'man aint about to-day, he aint," was the chuckling answer; "this here weather's too trying for his complexion."

There was evidently a secret joke in all this, for the boy chuckled till he choked. But Harcourt was in no mood for jesting, and having regarded Joe Ember with a jealous scrutiny—for he had a mistrust of the lad, not, as we know, altogether unfounded—he leaped into the boat, and allowed himself to be rowed across the river.

"I suppose you mean to say that your father's at home ill?" he condescended to ask on their way.

Joe, taken by surprise, and divining a jest in this inquiry also, gave his oars a jerk which caused him to execute the movement known as "catching a crab," and then spluttered out an answer in the affirmative.

"What's the matter with him?" Harcourt asked, fiercely.

"The matter? Well, as to that, he's a-sufferin' from a rush o' Lovely Nan to the 'ed. That's what's the matter with him."

At this moment the boat touched the bank, and, without stopping to inquire into the nature of the complaint thus so mysteriously indicated, Harcourt tossed the boy a sixpence and sprang ashore.

Absorbed in his own reflections, he did not notice that Joe made fast the boat, and followed him at a respectful distance, never drawing too near, yet never losing sight of him.

As he walked towards the nearest point from which a cab was to be taken, Harcourt's mind was busy with thoughts of the gloomiest nature.

His position was desperate. The failure of a desperate venture had crippled his means. Pagnell's death had cut off all opening to further speculations in the same kind, even if the suspicions aroused—he knew not how—had rendered it possible for them to embark in any.

Harcourt's own position, always dangerous, was rendered a thousandfold more so by the presence in England of one open foe, the man Jack Faroe, and by he knew not how many secret adversaries.

But what troubled him more than all was the new and startling tone Marco had adopted of late, and particularly that day. What had come to this man, once his confidential body-servant only, his valet and private secretary combined, and always his ready and most obsequious slave? And here was Marco speaking to him in terms which he would have suffered few men to adopt. Abusing him, and above all drawing a knife in his own defence! Not that it was so strange that an Italian should have recourse to the knife—that instrument, which he could use, naturally standing him in place of his fist, which he couldn't—but the whole change in the man's manner was so strange, his conduct in respect to Randolph Agnew's not unreasonable proposals not excepted.

"Some danger threatens," he reflected. "This scamp knows more than appears on the surface. Perhaps the tiger is preparing for his spring. Is that so? Perhaps he is prepared to betray me to the colonel, of whom he spoke so glibly. What more likely, now I think of it? That would account for the intimacy between them—brought about God only knows how!—and his peculiar looks and tones when he spoke of the colonel and Zerina. Why else should he have fixed those serpent eyes of his on me so strangely when he mentioned the two? It must be so."

A cold shudder crept over him as he arrived at this conviction; and he hurried on, drawing the folds of his loose coat about him.

Arrived at a cab-stand, he hesitated.

His impulse was to drive direct to Knowles Park, and spend an hour with Eva. But even in this direction his course was not clear. The rumours of Edgar Knowles's reverses of fortune which had been flying about town had not failed to reach his ears, and he was uncertain how to act.

"My only chance," he reflected, "is a good match. That will set me right; but, good heavens, if Knowles is really in difficulties, and I should commit myself to a marriage with a penniless girl!"

The prospect was so terrible that he fairly shuddered again. That would indeed, he felt, be reaching the climax of misfortune. However, he determined to see and ascertain the worst for himself, but first to devote the day to obtaining what information he could. It

was somewhat late in the evening when he eventually reached Knowles Park.

Eva was at home.

So the servant informed him; and he hailed the fact that she was not denied to friends as a good omen. But the sight of her, as she rose on his entering the drawing-room, and tottered towards him, was enough to confirm his worst impressions. She was pale. Her eyelids were red with tears. A wan smile lit up her delicate face; but it instantly died away, and her reception of him was cold and restrained.

"She was glad, so glad, he had come," she said.

But there was little gladness in her voice, and her hand was given with a lingering hesitation.

"Had she been ill?"

"No."

"Troubled?"

"Not much. That is, not so very much—but—but—"

And here she fairly broke down, and began to weep.

"You are unhappy, Eva," Harcourt said in his tenderest tones, and his voice had a sympathetic chord in it that had its effect on women—"something has happened."

Holding him at arm's length, she looked him in the face.

"You have not heard it, then?" she said, eagerly.

"Heard what?"

"The rumour of papa's misfortunes, his heavy losses and embarrassments."

It was now his turn to look dismay. Here was confirmation of the worst, and from an unmistakable source.

"It is true, then?" he asked. "These rumours are not unfounded?"

She shook her head.

"I know nothing," she replied. "Dreadful whispers have come to me from without, but I dared not speak to papa until I had learned more. But I see that you know all. Your delicacy alone prevents you from telling me the worst."

(Now Harcourt thought in his heart, "The artful young baggage affects innocence, so that I mayn't cross-question and get the truth out of her; but we shall see whether this child isn't a match for Miss Artful." He, however, went on quite another tack in continuing the conversation.)

"Believe me, Eva," he said, "I would withhold from you nothing that could add to your peace of mind. But why should we talk of these things? When it becomes inevitable, papa will, of course, take you into his confidence, and until then let us hope for the best."

"You are so good!" cried Eva, forgetting her self-imposed reserve, and throwing her arms about his neck.

At that instant the door was thrown open sharply and violently, and the lovers started in blushing confusion.

To their amazement, Felice, the French maid, rushed into the apartment, her hair down, and her face all consternation.

"Oh, mam'selle, mam'selle," she cried, gasping for breath, "something so dreadful! So terrible!"

"Papa is ill?" Eva asked, eagerly, her thoughts at once flying to the worst form of human calamity she was acquainted with.

"No, no!" cried Felice. "It is worse—worse."

"Worse?" demanded Harcourt; and the thought occurred to him whether Knowles had done him, Harcourt, the crowning wrong of committing suicide through his misfortunes.

"Oh, yes, mam'selle," replied Felice. "It is so terrible. Madame Effra is—gone!"

"Gone!"

Both listeners echoed the word at once.

"Gone from the house!—disappeared. Took all—took all! Every jewel—everything of worth. Madame has eloped!"

In spite of the extravagant grief of Felice—either real or assumed—neither of those whom she addressed could restrain a smile. The idea of Aunt Effra, at her time of life, eloping was too ridiculous.

Before they had time to express a word on the matter, Edgar Knowles entered the room.

"What is this I hear?" he inquired. "What about my sister?"

Felice darted across, and handed him a letter.

"Oh, monsieur!" she exclaimed, "read it. Oh, my poor madame—my poor lost madame!"

Without a word, Edgar Knowles opened the letter, and read thus—

"MY DEAR BROTHER—It is useless to ask you to pardon the step I am taking, because, with your insular prejudices, it will appear to you ridiculous. You have blunt affections, but none of the 'finer sensibilities' which belong to those of more favoured climes.

"I leave you. The step may seem abrupt, but has not been taken without premeditation. The truth is—I LOVE! You will not understand all that this means, but your English common sense will enable you to see that the passionate transports of the heart, when not to be regulated by the conventional usages of society, had better be indulged in more propitious climes.

"When, therefore, I tell you that he I love—I adore—I worship—though of princely birth in his own land, has no rank in the country of his exile, you will see that there is no resource for us.

"We love, and would be ONE.

"The realization of our aspirations is only possible by flight.

"Therefore I have consented to fly!

"Forgive me, Edgar dear, and strive to think the best of one who, even in this rash step—as you will call it—has not been wholly regardless of your interests, and those of your child. I have been too long a rival to her. Living under your roof, I have unintentionally divided the interest she alone ought to have created. This was wrong; it was unjust. I have resolved to do so no longer.

"I will not venture to outrage your sense of propriety so far as to ask you, to receive the Exile under your roof, and without the Exile you can no longer shelter the Exile's Bride.

"Farewell, then! 'Tis best we part. Attempt not pursuit. When this reaches you we shall be far from the land which has but too long held in its frigid embraces your devoted sister, "EFFRA."

It is doubtful if this romantic composition produced in the reading quite the effect intended. Eva, as she listened, could hardly repress a smile—especially at the lines which pictured her as the victim of Aunt

Effra's rivalry; while Harcourt's amazement was blended with a sense of the infinitely ridiculous. As for Edgar Knowles, he threw away the letter with undisguised contempt.

"What is the meaning of this farrago?" he demanded, addressing Felice. "Has my sister really left the house?"

"She has, monsieur."

"And with whom?"

Felice shrugged her shoulders, and turned out her rosy palms.

"It is impossible to say," she replied, with as much effrontery as if she had been speaking the truth.

"We must at least make inquiries," the brother returned. "Let the servants be questioned. And the neighbours, it is possible they know something of this folly. My sister must not be sacrificed for the want of an effort to save her."

But even as he spoke, his heart misgave him. He glanced from Harcourt to Eva with dismay, and pressed his hand to his brow as if to give relief to some physical pang. But the pang he really felt was too sharp for relief, as he thought—

"My sister leaves me in the hour of my trouble. She has heard of my ruin, and she, even she, deserts the sinking ship. And they say blood is thicker than water!"

The conviction of his sister's heartlessness was the sharpest pang he had yet endured.

The Stolen Love.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

OH, sweetest is the stolen love,
The apples shaken from the bough
Unseen, unseen, though eyes are keen,
And such a love was ours but now.

Of love that in the secret heart
Of rosebud sweetness hides delight,
We knew, we knew the summer through,
Ere all the golden days took flight.

Told in our glances when we met,
Told in the grasp of hand in hand;
Yet this, oh, this was bliss of bliss—
Our rapture none might understand.

That hidden treasure of the days,
We halved it in our hearts alone;
So dear, so dear, since far or near,
The little world was all our own.

For us the morning pearled, for us
The Memnon woods to song awoke;
But heard, but heard ere yet a bird
Warm from its nest the silence broke.

The rosy day went out in flame—
A torch that, quenched in falling, lies—
But bright, swam bright, our world of light,
The odorous planet of love's skies.

O, stolen love that was so sweet,
O, secret world that was so fair!
The sleeping dragon woke, and ours
Is but a memory—and despair.

Wild Horses.

A VERY interesting feat was performed the other day by a Mexican at the Alexandra Palace. Most English readers know by repute that immense herds of wild horses roam the prairies of Mexico and the United States. They are captured with comparative ease by means of the lasso, both by the native Indians and the Mexicans, and by a somewhat more cruel method by the skilled rifle shots amongst the American trappers and hunters, called "creating," which consists of firing a bullet through the withers, and temporarily stunning the animal, or killing him outright if the shot is fired too low.

Animals so captured are easily tamed, and are noted in America for their hardihood and power of endurance, though they are small, and not particularly slightly. Considerable interest, therefore, was felt at the announcement of the intention of a young Mexican horsebreaker, named Leon, to ride some of these mustangs, as they are called, 100 miles in five hours.

Ten of them that were roaming wild not many months since over the broad prairies of Texas have been recently imported, and probably the public demonstration that has now been made of their capabilities may lead to their introduction. They average fourteen hands, and are so poor and weedy in appearance, compared with English stock, that good judges of horseflesh unacquainted with their bottom and speed might well be excused for a disposition to back time.

Leon is a good-looking young fellow, weighing probably ten stone four or six, who sits a horse admirably, but he appears to ride somewhat heavily, and has no idea of lifting his mount in the fashion of a good English jockey.

The condition was that he was to be at liberty to change horses as often as he liked, and, as a rule, he changed every mile, though towards the end of the match he discarded a nag that was pretty well pumped out after half a mile, and pushed the best of his team that had still plenty of go in him for a couple of miles, without occasioning the animal any visible distress.

Leon chose, in preference to the excellent turfed race-course of the Alexandra Park, the gravelled trotting course. He selected seven out of his ten mustangs; one, however, went lame some time before the task was completed, and had to be discarded, making the work heavy for the half-dozen that remained.

Leon made his appearance in the showy dress of green velveteen, trimmed with gold lace and buttons, which is so dear to the Mexican heart, and dashed off with a flying start.

The best mover of his stud was the largest and most powerful horse, a dark brown, with white face and legs, —though a light weedy grey, which did not stay well to the end, made the fastest time in the early part of the race. Most of the horses had, over felt nummahs, English saddles, some with the huge wooden Mexican stirrup, and all were bitted with the powerful Mexican bits, which promptly drags the most wayward brute on to his haunches, on pain of a broken jaw.

Sometimes Leon dismounted and remounted in the ordinary style, but more generally he pulled up close to the near side of the horse that was in waiting, and putting his left knee on the saddle of the horse he had done with, threw his right leg over the fresh horse, and

shifted his seat very cleverly without touching the ground—a procedure which tickled the spectators immensely.

Leon did not get through his task without accidents; for in the fourth mile his horse hugged the barrier too closely, cannoned against it, and fell, of course throwing his rider; and in the eleventh mile, a cross-tempered skewbald he was riding jumped the barrier, but catching his hind legs, he and his rider performed a somersault in company, the green velvetten of the rider and the four white legs of his horse being so intimately mixed up that matters looked rather squally. Horse and man, however, were speedily on their feet, the first certainly not much the worse; and though Leon rubbed his nose and his head rather ruefully for a second or so, he soon pulled himself together, and remounting, dashed off again, under a running fire of applause, his pluck quite winning the hearts of the sightseers.

The heat of the day soon made it necessary for Leon to discard his upper garments, and they went one by one, till he rode bare-headed, in the white under trousers of the Mexicans, and with only a slight vest left of the brilliant green velvetten suit.

Leon drank and smoked frequently during his long ride, his manager riding alongside him when he needed refreshments, and handing a soda-water bottle containing beet tea, or a lighted cigarette, which he disposed of while going at full speed. He gradually gained on time until he had ten minutes to the good, and then, as his horses got weary, especially after losing one of the number from lameness, he began to draw on the balance thus stored up, which at the end of the 100 miles showed the satisfactory surplus of 3 min. 62·5 sec.

The spectators, who had been well disposed from the moment of Leon's second mishap, grew warmer and warmer as the task drew towards what would evidently be, barring accident, a successful conclusion; and when he completed the 200th lap, and finished his task, the crowd cheered him to the echo, and it required the aid of two stalwart mounted constables and sundry policemen on foot to save him from being swept bodily away by his enthusiastic admirers.

Extinguishers in Grosvenor-square.

BEFORE several of the houses in this square, and, indeed, in other streets at the West-end, may still be seen specimens of the iron link-extinguishers on the top of the railings. Numerous allusions to the linkboys and their calling are to be found in the plays and lighter poems of the last century, and links were commonly carried before carriages at the West-end until about the year 1807, when the introduction of gas gradually superseded their use. The linkmen and linkboys would appear to have been a disorderly class, and the profession to have been followed as a cloak for thieving.

It is worthy, perhaps, of a note, as showing the reluctance of our aristocracy to adopt newfangled fashions, that Grosvenor-square was the last street or square which was lit with oil; the last oil-lamp there was not superseded by gas until 1842.—*Cassell's Old and New London*.

AN impudent adventurer having married an heiress, a wit remarked that the bridegroom's brass was outshone by the bride's tin.

Mems. by a Matron.

WE are at last, thanks to the good taste and enterprise of some of our tradespeople, taking a leaf out of the book of the French, and making preparations for bathing with decency, delicacy, and a dash of style. Any one who has visited such watering places as Trouville, Etretat, or Arcachon must have been struck with the way in which bathing is conducted, the changing colours and decorations of the bathing dresses, and the matter-of-fact, businesslike style of the bathers, who trip down over the sands, to enter the water hand in hand, like so many fashionably dressed mermaids who have, by the study of Darwinism, dropped their tails and grown feet. How different at Brighton, Worthing, Margate, or Ramsgate, with their wretched, stuffy bathing machines, which a miserable horse jolts down into the water! Who does not remember the sensation of donning the horribly gritty, salted piece of serge which clings to every limb, and drapes the form funereally? Bathing dress, forsooth! What an insult to a garment, to call that wet, clinging, strangling horror a dress! Times are mending, however; for Messrs. Avis and Co., of Islington, have invented what they call an "Improved Registered Bathing Costume and Safety Dress," which is declared to be "an absolute indispensable for the seaside." Judging from its appearance in the plate that has been shown me, where a very charming young lady is armed for her fight with the salt sea waves, the said dress is all that can be desired. Here is its description. It is complete, with bathing cap, (forming a mackintosh wrapper), and leather sling, for the purpose of taking it to and from the bathing machine. The cap obviates the unpleasantness of taking home a wet bathing dress, and the sling the trouble of carrying it in the hand, thus doing away with the necessity of leaving the dress with the bathing woman. The cap or wrapper is made sufficiently large to receive a comb and brush. Each costume is fitted with a receptacle for an air inflater, which is fixed so that there is no possibility of its being displaced, and it acts as an assistant in swimming, and ensures safety in rough water or a strong current. The costumes can be purchased either with or without the inflater. There, ladies. The hot weather is upon you, and the wavelet murmuring by asks you to come unto these yellow sands. Pay, then, a visit to Messrs. Avis first; there will be plenty to tempt you besides bathing dresses, but that seemed the most seasonable garment for my mems.

In my mems. that were published in this journal some time since, I took occasion to speak very highly in praise of the various productions of the establishment of Mrs. Addley Bourne. There was one article, however, that escaped mention, and was brought to my notice by the admirably graceful figure of a Parisian lady whom I encountered at a party. If this lady did not wear a Swanbill Corset, it must have been a Main-tenon. The effect was exquisite. Without showing the slightest sign of compression, the redundancies of the form were contracted and regulated so as to produce a figure of which any lady might be proud. Suppleness, elasticity, and gentle but firm pressure seem to be the qualities of these corsets, and they effect that which is above all necessary—they set off the present style of costume to the best advantage.

Wanderings in Half-a-Guinea.

BY MAJOR MONK-LAUSEN.

CHAPTER IV.—AN ALGERIAN REMINISCENCE.

UNABLE to shoot from my present position, I ran forwards; but before I could reach the spot the moolah reared up, and rolled over backwards, with the knife still sticking in its side, Atah at the same time falling senseless.

When I came up the beast was very dead, the man not so very. In fact, I could not see that he was particularly torn, though a good deal bruised, and bleeding here and there. I propped him up against a root, gave him a drink of water, and went to have a look at his wife, who had evidently had a violent blow on the side of the head and shoulder, but who was also breathing, and opened her eyes when I poured water into her mouth. The rest of the party came up, and in a quarter of an hour the two invalids were able to say what they knew of the occurrence, which was not much to tell. Atah saw Piti knocked down by the moolah's paw as he sprang past her, whereupon, resenting the liberty, he fired at the animal, and was immediately floored himself. He just remembered drawing his knife after this, and nothing more. The little damage done to the couple was a great puzzle to me until I examined the moolah's forepaws, when I found that one of my bullets had passed through both of them, completely cutting away the claws; so that it was with the gloves on, as it were, that he had fought. Fortunately, he had not found time or opportunity to bring his teeth into play. The whole adventure lasted but while an athlete could run a hundred yards.

Since Atah and Piti, in spite of their wonderful escape, were quite unable to travel, I determined to bivouac where we were, there being water near.

The first thing to be done when the site of our resting place was cleared of scorpions and other venomous things, the baggage collected, and a guard set in the usual routine I had established, was to search for the cow, who had scampered off on the alarm of the moolah. Soon after the men detached for this duty had gone, I myself started alone in an opposite direction to that they had taken, to do a little pot-hunting, seeking, as I always found best on such occasions, for a thinner part of the forest. The moolah had doubtless scared the game away, for I proceeded some distance without seeing anything bigger than hares, which were plentiful enough; and I was thinking of knocking over some of these, in default of a nobler quarry, when a curious noise attracted my attention, and creeping cautiously in the direction of it, I came upon the lost cow in the centre of a group of monkeys, the largest I had yet seen. Indeed, I should have taken them for a hairy race of men, if it had not been for their tails. Some of them were holding her legs, others her horns, while a grey-headed old fellow was milking her into a large, hollow-shaped leaf, which might hold about three quarts. On my running towards them, they scuttled off, chattering more loudly than ever, the milking monkey following, however, more deliberately, carefully carrying his calabash to avoid spilling the milk. The action was so funny that I did not interfere with him, especially as he was old and tough; but selecting a fat young ape who had jumped up a tree, I dropped him with a shot

through the heart, and throwing the carcase on the buffalo, I led her gently back to the bivouac. I had conceived a certain prejudice against monkey meat since reading Mr. Darwin's works; but, on reflecting that a strict endeavour to avoid feeding on what, according to his theory, might be a possible relation would necessitate an abstinence from oysters, I conquered the prejudice. This individual monkey, as prepared by the inestimable Peter Tromp, convinced me that the effort was a wise one.

Though maintaining strict discipline on the march, and in the performance of every description of duty, I encouraged my people to be friendly, frank, and fearless in the hours of rest and recreation. Stretched around the bivouac fire, I drew them on to talk of their former lives, of the customs of their people, while I in my turn told them in simple language some of the marvels of civilization, or else—which, I think, pleased them still more—I recounted my adventures and hair-breadth escapes in other lands, and described animals which they had never seen.

At first, when these colloquies had to pass through Peter Tromp's mouth as interpreter, the communication of ideas was slow; but afterwards, very soon indeed, when I spoke Poopooan freely, and understood it with still greater accuracy, these talks, which sometimes almost partook of the nature of lectures, were far more interesting and satisfactory. And on the occasions when we gathered together in a social manner, I made it a rule in addressing Peter to use the Poopooan language as soon as I was able to do so; and I am sure that this show of confidence in the natives, and the fact of the two Europeans not holding aloof, or speaking to one another in a tongue unintelligible to themselves, had a good effect, and bore fruit in seasons of trial and emergency.

I think that it was upon this present occasion, while we were reposing from our fatigues and digesting the monkey, that Peter asked me if I had ever been in a position of as great peril as Atah had been that day. I could have given them a hundred instances; but I did not wish to dim the lustre of Atah's glory, as the man who had so recently been the hero of a most sensational encounter. So I evaded the direct question, and replied that I had once been in a lion's den.

"What is a lion?" was the immediate question, and I had to describe the monarch of the African forests as well as I could; and afterwards to tell my story, which, put in other words than those by which it was interpreted to my native audience, was this:—

In the early days of my Algerian lion-hunting expedition, I made my head-quarters at Constantine, and endeavoured to find the game of which I was in search in the country immediately round about. Plenty of information was brought to me: a lion had been seen here, a lion had been heard there; and I was kept rushing about in different directions on unprofitable errands. I spent days in the saddle, with my double-barrelled smooth-bore on the pommel, scouring the grassy plains with dogs. I passed many a moonlight night watching the carcase of a dead bullock, or a live kid tied to a stake; but it was all in vain. I might just as well have passed my time spinning with a spoon for Thames trout. The first requisite for a sportsman is patience: I know that well, and have cultivated the virtue accordingly.

But there are limits. No terrier will scratch at a burrow where there is no rabbit; no cat worth her salt—milk, I should say—will watch a hole from which the exit of a mouse is impossible. I gave up at last, and declared my intention of journeying farther from the haunts of civilization. My friends, the French officers, dissuaded me strongly, warning me of a very painful fate indeed if I persisted in my rash design; for the Kabyles were in a turbulent and rebellious condition; and if they took me prisoner, an event which was certain to come off, they would probably—well, I should be sharp set, not in the sense of being hungry. On the contrary, as Hood sings of the suicide who was buried with the old-fashioned ceremonies where four cross-roads met, I should have a stake in my inside. I made fun of their remonstrances, and they thought me foolhardy; oaths of the most solemn nature prevented my explaining to them the real reason why I did not fear trusting myself in Arab hands. The fact was that I held a position—which must not be specified, and several of the Kabyle chiefs were adepts in a mystery—which cannot be more particularly alluded to. Many of my readers, however, will understand what I mean when I say that a sign would at any time have sufficed to save my life; while the presentation of certain letters which I bore would have secured me help and hospitality. And there would have been the less difficulty about this—that I was an Englishman, not a Frenchman; the Kabyles had no quarrel with me; and, under any circumstances, if I once had an opportunity of making my nationality known, I had every reason to hope for tolerably decent treatment.

So I went my own way, and eventually had good sport, though not all at once. The native tribe with which I fraternised had many brave and energetic fellows in it; but they were bred up with the idea that a lion was an animal to be avoided rather than sought, and did not make good trackers. The hunter of big game must be able to educate the people to serve his purpose; and it takes some time to learn a country, and the ways of the animals inhabiting it. It is true that a perfect novice may light upon the object of which he is in search the very first time he goes out, for luck counts for a great deal in this world; but those who reckon on it will generally be disappointed. Take a ticket in a foreign lottery, and see.

That there were lions about was beyond all question, for the herdsmen complained of the havoc they made in their cattle, and we could hear their roaring for ourselves at night; but days passed before I could obtain a personal introduction. I am not one of those men, however, whose devotion to sport is such as to preclude all interest in other matters. The wild ways and barbaric chivalry of the people with whom for the time being my lot was cast, the romantic character of the surrounding scenery, all excited my sympathetic attention.

One day I was particularly struck by a hole in a hill, past which the party accompanying me appeared to hurry with an aversion which seemed to imply that there was some superstitious legend attached to it; but my endeavours to learn what it was were evaded with a pertinacity which naturally served to stir my curiosity the more keenly. At last I was informed that the spot was the scene of one of the stern acts of Marshal Bu-

geaud. That energetic officer passing through that part of the country on an expedition, a whole village—men, women, and children—took refuge in a large cavern, to which the excavation I had seen was the only approach at that time. The Marshal, not caring to advance farther leaving so large a body of armed men in his rear, summoned them to surrender; but as they had plenty of bread and water, and knew that the French could not possibly stop long enough to reduce them by blockade, they refused his offers. So the Marshal lit fires in the mouth of the tunnel, and stifled the lot of them; and if you had heard the expressions which the sheik who told me the story made use of on the occasion, and had seen his eyes sparkle, and his beard bristle, and his hand clench the hilt of his weapon, you would have felt with me that this piece of strategy would not be forgotten or forgiven for a generation or two.

I do not say that Marshal Bugeaud could have helped himself: we English have a good many historical glass houses, and must be careful how we throw stones. I merely remark that politically the result was unfortunate. It seemed, from further accounts, that the subterranean passage ran nearly through the hill, which was but a narrow spur, the cavern being on the other side of it; and, some years after the tragedy, the outer side fell in on the occasion of a shock of earthquake, and the skeletons of the victims being thus exposed, were reverently collected and buried.

But the approach on this side of the hill was very arduous and precipitous, and the whole place was avoided as an accursed spot; for the injury had not been avenged. Since there was a clear passage through the opening I had seen to the cavern, and a wide exit when I reached it, I determined on an exploration, and without intimating to any one where I was going, for I did not know in what light the Arabs would consider my curiosity, I shouldered my rifle and set out from the camp at daybreak one morning, alone.

A couple of hours' march brought me to the curious tunnel, which much resembled one of those minor shafts—back doors to the mines, as it were—which one comes upon unexpectedly in Devonshire and Cornwall. It entered the hill laterally, tending downwards for a few yards, and then sloping slightly upwards, which must have aided the smoking-out process considerably. The passage was high enough to admit me without much stooping, and I advanced along it rapidly and without impediment for a considerable distance, not experiencing any greater discomfort than squashing a fat toad or two, or having a bat fly in my face. At last, however, I came to an obstruction, the precise nature of which I was unable to determine, being in total darkness; but there seemed to be a slab of loose rock to be thrust aside before I could pass. Exerting all my strength, I tore it out of its place, and scrambled past; but in doing this, dislodged an avalanche of loose earth and stones. In fact, the roof of the passage fell in behind me, effectually cutting off my retreat: an uncomfortable position, which was clearly revealed to me when I struck a wax match for the purpose of ascertaining what had really happened. There was one comfort—the light burned freely, and caused no explosion. This proved ventilation, and ventilation meant a hole at the other end. The tunnel then was not blocked in front as well as in

rear, and I had a good chance of reaching the cavern on the farther side of the hill, which was no longer an enclosed chamber, if the Kabyle report was to be trusted, but a mere open cavity in the rock. I urged all this in my mind, but still could not help a feeling of considerable relief when a distant glimmer of light assured me for certain that I was not buried alive, and hastened towards this faint star with the ardour of a wandering spirit whose home was there. It grew, expanded, and soon was evidently not a star at all, but a patch of blue sky. Then I reached the spot where the passage entered the cavern, of course at the back, immediately opposite the mouth, or I should not have seen the sky as I approached. This exit of the tunnel was about five feet from the ground, and was masked with blocks of stone. It was less roomy than the other part, so that I was obliged to complete the last few yards of my journey on my knees, pilgrim fashion, and the actual aperture afforded me but a narrow space to squeeze through. But of this I was not too anxious to avail myself without reconnoitring, for a peculiar acrid smell assailed my nostrils, and a low, deep, murmuring sound, something like that of a watermill, was distinctly audible.

Carefully protruding my head, and peering downwards between two boulders, my eyes were at last greeted by the sight of the big game I had come to hunt. A fine lioness lay purring, with eyes half closed, in the centre of the cavern, while a couple of the prettiest little cubs imaginable were playing with her tail. As a natural historian as well as a sportsman, I considered myself fortunate indeed to have this opportunity, afforded to few, of seeing the monarch of beasts in the retirement of domestic life; but when the first flush of enthusiasm had passed off, I reflected that I was really in a somewhat ticklish position, and made an instinctive movement to retire, which was immediately checked by the recollection that my retreat was cut off.

The lioness was a fair shot from my present position, so far as nearness was concerned; but neither eye nor shoulder was presented. I might slay or disable her with a couple of bullets in the back; but it was much more likely that I should merely wound and exasperate her, and then she would easily scratch the hole wide enough to admit her lithe body, and my position would be exactly that of a rabbit in a blind burrow *l'île-à-l'île* with a ferret. It was just possible that I might have time to load again before she reached me; but as the operation had to be performed lying on my back, it must needs be a close thing. If my weapon on this occasion had been a breechloader, even single-barrelled, I should have felt perfect confidence; it was the period of reloading which constituted the danger. Had she had nine lives, I could have blown them all out of her head while she was scratching, with a breechloader; but I had not got one, so it was of no use speculating upon that.

It did not mend the matter, however, to remain quiescent; and if I crawled out into the cavern I should have a worse chance than by keeping in the burrow, since nothing but her sudden death could prevent the lioness from crushing my skull like an egg-shell with one spring and paw-pat. As it was necessary to come to some decision, I determined to wait for the exposure of a vital part, fire one barrel, and reserve the other till she attacked me in my retreat, and then endeavour to send the second bullet through her head.

While I was thus watching my opportunity, however, a deep roar resounded along the cavern vault, the entrance of which was suddenly darkened; and looking up, I saw a magnificent lion, the father of the family, advancing with a large deer in his mouth, which he carried as easily as a cat would a mouse. The two cubs trotted forward to meet him, expressing their pleasure and approval by funny little gambols; while their mamma, rising slowly and stretching herself, followed more majestically. My position was now more complicated: it was fortunate that I had not found my opportunity for firing, else I should now, at best, have had to deal with the exasperated widower with empty barrels.

Whatever chance of escape I might have in the future, there was evidently none at present, and all I had to do was to keep as still and as much out of sight as possible till dinner was over, at all events. Wild animals hate to be disturbed in their meals. I am not very partial to it myself. This, which seemed to me a very long one, was conducted far more amicably than those of *feræ* in confinement mutually are: there was no snarling, growling, or fighting, but the deer was devoured quietly, in a most harmonious manner. Do you know what it is, when the nerves are in an extreme state of tension from excitement, to have the burden of a song running in the head? It sounds a small matter, but the effect is almost maddening at last. At this time, as I lay in the entrance of that passage, and listened to the lion family crunching up their deer, a line of that old song, "The fox got up one moonlight night," kept dinning in my ears:

"Bones, oh! bones, oh! and the young ones shall nibble at the bones, oh!"

My bones, perchance—nay, probably—would soon be picked by those pretty cubs.

At last the meal was finished, and the gorged animals stretched themselves out in repose. The lion, tired I suppose by his hunt, soon dropped off in a sound slumber; but the lioness was more wakeful, and when I cautiously peeped I could see that there was still a glimmer in her yellow eyes. At last, she too yielded to the drowsy influence of digestion, and then I determined to risk an attempt at escape; and lowering myself as noiselessly as I could, I stole on tiptoe round the side of the cave. Just as I reached the entrance, one of the little cubs came rubbing up against my legs for notice. I patted it on the head, stepped outside, and fairly bolted down the steep ground. How I escaped breaking my neck over such precipitous ground astonished me when I returned to the spot in cold blood. But I got over it without accident.

That was the first story told by me at our bivouac fire, but not the last by a great many, for the Poopooans have a great shyness of speaking about their manners, customs, religion, and other matters which are interesting to the traveller, and I found that the best way to make them talk was to start by recounting some such adventure as they could understand, though the surroundings had a piquant novelty about them; for the story done, they would eagerly discuss it amongst themselves, mentioning any instances they had known of events which might in any way be compared to it; and so they could be led imperceptibly to talk of matters about which they were generally so remarkably reticent.

When the talk was done, the fire banked, the watch set, and the buffalo cow's horns rubbed with phosphorus, we chose the spots which suited our fancies best, and composed ourselves to sleep; though the attempt in my case was a miserable failure.

I have refrained from dwelling on the annoyances suffered from mosquitoes, as the books of all travellers are filled with them; and no wonder, for they occasion far greater distress than all the other more interesting sources of pain and privation put together. The Chinese, ingenious in cruelty, have a method of putting a criminal to lingering death by the simple privation of sleep, and it is in this manner that these horrible insects act. I have the misfortune to be very sensible to their attacks, having a delicate cuticle; but every one who has travelled in a moderately warm climate, and even many of those who have always stayed at home, can appreciate these sufferings to a certain extent. For the gnat and the mosquito are identical; only in some climates, and again in certain districts, the insects are larger, more numerous, more voracious, and more poisonous than in others. If I now allude to the matter, it is simply because of a curious method I employed on this occasion to obtain a good night's rest. My work that day had been very severe, and I was simply worn out with fatigue. But our bivouac that night was in the neighbourhood of a marsh, and the mosquitoes were so virulent and their stings so large, that some of them absolutely perforated the lobes of my ears, so that the insects, unable to withdraw them, were caught and destroyed there. No weariness could bring oblivion of their attacks, which were as if red-hot needles were being plunged into the whole surface of the body, for the clothes were no protection. Peter Tromp suffered likewise, though in an inferior degree; but the majority of my native followers enjoyed a strange immunity: the mosquitoes did not seem to like their flavour. To lie still was for me, however, impossible; and I was wandering about in a restless manner when something peculiar about one of the men, who was lying on his back, fast asleep, attracted my attention. He was under a tree, at some distance from the fire, which had burned low; but by its faint glimmering I could just distinguish a something dark, which seemed to be hovering about the man's head. Curiosity led me to approach to see what it was, when I found that an enormous bat was clinging to the sleeper's neck, while his leathery wings kept beating with a rapid vibration which stirred as much breeze as a winnowing machine.

HE was an applicant for the position of writing teacher in one of our public schools. They gave him a copybook, and asked him for a specimen of what he could do. He took up the pen, and, in a handwriting that looked like a flash of lightning that had mistaken the direct road, wrote as follows:—"Sorrer doesn't kill fokes as fast as green gooseburrys."

AN ingenious man, called by ladies a wretch, calculates that letting 1,000 represent a woman's chances of marriage in the whole course of her life, 136 of those chances are lost when she is seventeen years old, 533 when she is twenty-one, 915 when she is twenty-seven, 992 when she is thirty-three, and the entire thousand when she is forty-five.

A Warning for Tourists.

THE following sad little story of truth has been sent to the *Daily News*, and will at this season of the year point its own moral:—

While the heavy July days linger, and weary members of the bar are planning the autumn excursion which is to bring them health of body and brain for another year of mental application, a pathetic little drama, closely connected with them, is being enacted in a quiet corner of Europe. Amongst the mountain hills of the Tyrol a grim game of hide-and-seek is being carried on; the seeker is a sorrowing relative, and that which is hidden away is the body of a dead man.

It is scarcely ten months since a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, William Whittaker Barry, author of "A Treatise on the Practice of Conveyancing, &c.," "All round Ireland on Foot," "Walking Tour in Normandy," &c., taking a tour through the Tyrol, reached the inn at Krimml with the purpose of seeing the Achen Waterfalls.

It was on the 28th of September when he arrived at the inn, and he remained there until the 30th, when he left to pursue his way, according to his custom, without a guide, and alone. Also, as was usual with him, he was clad in a summer suit, without overcoat, and, except a light knapsack, with nothing more than would suffice for a walk over good roads in England.

The autumn of last year was, however, exceptional, and by the end of September winter in the mountains had already begun. But his powers of endurance were very great, both as regards hunger, thirst, and fatigue. He had walked round Ireland from end to end, just before the outbreak of Fenianism, and had then to suffer from the fact that he was sometimes suspected of being a Fenian, and at others of being a Government spy. He had, in consequence, often to walk far into the night after a long day's travel before he could find food or shelter, and once spent the night in the open air. Ultimately he was mistaken for a Fenian leader, was watched, followed and arrested.

But nothing could make him cautious, and he was in the habit of so constantly exposing himself to fasting and darkness in tracts of country with which he was unacquainted, that he probably thought that his powers could not be too highly taxed.

In the hotel book at Krimml he has entered his name as leaving Krimml for Kasern. Kasern lies on the other side of a mountain, and to cross this mountain, nine thousand feet high, by a pass used, as it appears, only in summer time, the traveller left his inn, as reported, "in very cold weather and continuous rain and snow." He is seen again at the little inn upon the road after a walk of four hours of steep ascent; he remains an hour here, but declines the bedroom which is offered him, pursuing his journey still alone, and, as it would appear, misdirected, from Kasern to the Kays or glacier which lies beneath the highest ascent of the mountain.

Later in the afternoon he is met going in this direction, and redirected to the proper road, and is so left by a shepherd, in the coming darkness and blinding snow, standing aside to let three hundred and fifty sheep pass him in single file as they follow the man who leaves him to what he believed to be certain death.

Evidence is given that he was twice persuaded to

take a guide, and that this last shepherd remonstrated with him strongly before he left him; but he did leave him. He was then red and blue with cold, with only two hours before sunset, and in the midst of a snow-storm, to do a distance requiring five hours' good walking.

He has never been seen since. Rumours at Saltzbourg of robbery and murder led to repeated searches at the time when such search was possible, but with no result.

So easily may a man living in chambers step out of life that it was a month before his absence was remarked, and that only by legal friends who noticed his vacant place at the Hall dinner. It was more than a month before a kindly paragraph in the *Standard*, which had escaped attention, could be traced back by his relatives, and another effectual search be attempted.

In the valley of the Windbackthal, where he was last seen, the snow still lies pure and white as when it fell, though some few patches of green have brought back the shepherd with his sheep, and the falling stones from the mountain render the place dangerous.

But men will risk life and limb this year, as every year, amongst the snowy fastnesses of the Alps, seeking for that charm of adventure which is the Englishman's truest holiday. Will none give a thought to one of the hardest and bravest of their fellow-tourists, and to his uncertain fate amongst the lonely mountains of the Tyrol?

Seasonable Advice.

SEEING that the weather is such that one would like to do as Sydney Smith suggested—take off one's flesh, and sit in one's bones—the following instructions must sound welcome:—

Ices—delicious word—may be compounded of various substances, but are usually "flavoured" with the juice and pulp of fruits or prepared flavourings. They are congealed by means of ice, broken small and mixed with coarse salt.

The freezing pots should be made of pewter, not only for its durability, but for its being more wholesome to use; especially so, where the mixture intended to be frozen is mixed with any fruit or preparation that contains an acid, and nearly all fruits contain a portion of either citric or malic acid. These act chemically upon zinc, of which metal many freezers are now made, and consequently the delicate flavour of the fruit is destroyed and the colour changed, and the preparation becomes unwholesome if kept in them.

To make any kind of ice, there must be a stout tub, diameter according to the size of the freezers; these must be so placed in the tub that they may be kept surrounded with broken ice, in pieces about an inch and a half in size. This can be done with an ice piercer, sold at the cutlers'.

The ice must then be mixed with the salt, three pounds of which will do for a large pailful of ice. The freezing-tub must be filled up to within two inches of the top edge of the freezers, and these must be kept from the sides of the tub about three inches.

The process of making ices being both tedious and laborious, where a large quantity is required, those who

are novices at making them will find a considerable amount of trouble saved by using freezers of a larger size than the quantity of ice they require; for example, in a freezing pot that will hold a gallon of water, not more than three quarts, at most, of any mixture should be put, and so in proportion for larger or smaller quantities; the reason for this is that it allows greater space for "agitation and friction," and the repeated contact of the mixture with the sides of the freezer by means of the spatula, through which continuous manipulation the process is completed with half the labour and time it otherwise takes; hence it follows that the ice is made more quickly if the freezer be only half filled.

Having made the proper arrangements with the tub and freezer as directed, pour the mixture into the freezer, and proceed to turn it round and round, at first with the hand, by means of the handles on the lid. Continue this until you perceive the mixture adhering firmly to the sides of the freezer, when the pewter spatula, sold with the freezers, must be used to scrape down the sides and from the bottom; and this must be done alternately, keeping the freezer rapidly moving round in the ice tub, and taking the mixture off the sides as it freezes to them.

After a short time, the lid may be kept off, as the action of the spatula alone will be sufficient to turn the freezer, as though on a pivot, by catching the sides with it, especially if it is made to rest upon a portion of ice. It depends upon this continuous movement entirely, how soon the mixture becomes sufficiently frozen. As soon as it is stiff enough for the spatula to stand upright, it may be considered completed. But when the ice is to be served out in portions, at various periods during the day or evening, it is necessary to keep the sides occasionally stirred into the body of the mixture with the spatula, it would otherwise get frozen hard and lumpy. This precaution is more particularly necessary with "water ices."

The Egotist's Note-book.

A CURIOUS fallacy was sat upon the other day when, at the Guildhall police-court, a publican was summoned for defacing the coin of the realm by bending two half-sovereigns. The defence offered was that the coins were offered in payment, and, being bad, they bent when tested; Mr. Beard, the attorney for the defence, declaring that a good half-sovereign would not bend. Whereupon Mr. Gerald Griffin, the cashier, placed a good half-sovereign between his teeth, and bent it at right angles. Now, if Mr. Beard had been a little more grey, he would have known better; but, at the same time, it may be asked, why did not the alderman on the bench have Mr. Gerald Griffin, the cashier, prosecuted for defacing the coin of her Majesty's realm? Ah! good people, coin is scarce; deal gently with it when it comes to hand.

Talking of spurious coins, the *Birmingham Post* gives a very interesting account of some base sovereigns that are being manufactured, and whose cost cannot be less than eleven shillings each, though it seems odd that, for such a profit as nine shillings in the pound, people could be found to run risks by passing them. The base sovereign corresponds so exactly in

weight, colour, ring, and cutting with the genuine coin as to deceive even many practised bankers. It bears the Queen's head, seemingly a little flattened by wear, with the date 1855, and on the obverse the shield and crown. The milling appears to be admirably executed; but on a close inspection of the lettering, some slight flaws are observable in the formation, more especially of the letter "N." The colour is just a shade paler than that of the English sovereign, resembling more that of the Australian gold coins; and the metal, being what is termed platinum gold, is of the same colour throughout. The only obvious distinctions between this counterfeit and the genuine sovereign are that the former is very slightly larger, and that the ring or tone is a little sharper than that of pure gold.

Here is another interesting police case. A respectable-looking man was brought up charged with begging, and told Mr. Benson that he was only asking for a little assistance; for he had come to London to obtain a surgeon's berth on board ship, and had been disappointed. Hereupon the proprietor of a waxworks exhibition, who happened to be in court, came forward and exclaimed, "I know this gentleman well, and became acquainted with him while I was travelling through Scotland. He behaved very kindly to me on several occasions, and I know him to be a gentleman. If he is hard up I'll assist him, and if he likes he can look after my figures." I like that "happened." At this Mr. Benson said—making a magisterial joke—"But your figures are wax, and do not require medical attention." The worthy magistrate is wrong, for we know from history to what injury waxwork "figgers" are subjected. Did not an enthusiastic young man at Utica call the wax "figger" of Judas Iscariot a "pusillanermus cuss," and "cave in" his head? Who knows whether, like Artemus Ward, the proprietor of this waxwork exhibition may not have insults offered to his educational objects? But, alas! to how few of us it occurs that in time of trouble such a good friend *happens* to be in court!

If Sir Salar Jung visits Switzerland, will the good people there take him to be the descendant, embrowned by foreign suns, of the celebrated Jungfrau?

Announcement is made that Sir Sydney H. Waterlow has returned to England from America. If Brother Jonathan has behaved towards the ex-Lord Mayor as he behaved towards a person I esteem, the honourable baronet has come back with spirits high and water low indeed!

The *Lancet* has been probing a matter that deserves attention—namely, the unsatisfactory nature of the police clothing this hot weather. One don't know which to pity most, the constable buttoned up in blue, or the grenadier in scarlet—and that delicate, cool, comfortable eighteen inches of bliss he wears upon his head—his busby.

In one of the old broad-sheets of caricatures published some fifty years ago, a black gentleman with a broom is seen deploring his fate at a crossing, and he exclaims, "Dis dry wedder play de debble wid my business. Nebber mind: rain hard to-morrow, and

den me sweep in de coppers much as ebber." One remembers this on reading that a wooden-legged crossing sweeper was summoned to Bow-street the other day for not paying school board fees. For excuse, he complained that times were hard, and his people all out of town; and to quote his own words, "And the few that's left, sir, can't afford to pay nothing. People as used to give me a penny don't even look at me now. Times is so hard. Besides, your worship, look at the weather; not a blessed drop of rain to speak of for a month, and the roads as clean as the pavement." Never mind, my friend; rain hard to-morrow, and you may "sweep in de coppers"—no, we are more refined now, the bronzes—"much as ebber."

Why did not the Hon. Lewis Wingfield go with the times when he brought out his novel, "Slippery Ground"? Seeing what has been the fashionable pursuit of late, "The Rink" would have been slippery ground of the most attractive nature, and a title that would have made the story glide.

The late hailstorm seems to have been one to avoid, or, at all events, regard from under better shelter than an umbrella; for a Mr. Reed, writing from Tottenham, says it "lodged a hailstone, the size of a large bullet, in the centre of a hanging pear." Now, how would that hailstone, the size of a large bullet, have acted upon a walking man? Seeing that it was one of millions, the experiment would not have been a pleasant one to try. As to the pear, it would have hung on that tree till long after it had become mellow before it could have anticipated bearing such pips as these.

How very much on the increase is the objection to the enforcement of the compulsory vaccination laws. Societies are formed against them, and every week people are summoned, re-summoned, fined, re-fined, and imprisoned for non-compliance. Our medical authorities, for the most part, declare it to be a safeguard against small-pox; but, granting this, or that the vaccinated one will take the disease more lightly, there is a good deal to be said on the other side. That vaccination has its drawbacks, no one can deny. Speaking from our own experience, we could cite many cases of healthy children being reduced to wretched little invalids and sufferers from objectionable skin diseases, brought on by the infusion of vaccine lymph into their unfortunate little veins. At the present day, with our sanitary laws, disinfectants, and means of arresting contagion, it is doubtful whether vaccination should be made the compulsory thing it is. Years ago, any one who protested against inoculation would have been looked upon as a madman. Surely, in these days of progress, a little more leniency might be shown to those who have good reason for not approving of the law.

It is always refreshing to see some one come forward on behalf of the dumb creation, so long as he does it in a matter-of-fact, sensible way, and not to air crochets of his own. Now, Mr. Flower, a gentleman who seems to have made the horse a great study, has just come forward with a new work dealing upon the way in which we should treat our horses. He appears as the defender of these animals, and, so to speak, takes away their bits and cruppers, and holds them up before man,

saying, "What are you thinking about, to treat the poor creatures like this? You stick this powerful bit in their jaws, and then, with a bearing rein, hold the head up to a certain height, while, by means of a crupper, you do the same for the animal's tail. Now, what absurdity is this. Every one agrees that a horse never looks so noble as when, with flowing mane and tail unfettered by harness, he careers across a field; and yet you tie his head and tail together to make him look handsome! Why not put him on stays to give him a smaller waist?" Truly, great absurdities are committed with horses, and the vivisection done with barbarous bits might well evoke the anger of some of our strong-minded ladies. It is like going back to the middle ages, when, to make his horse go, a knight wore spurs with rowel points an inch long, the whole machine resembling a star. Some people say, however, that these spurs were not so cruel as they looked, for they were used outside the housings and caparisoning the great brewers' dray-horses of the knights of old, when clad in full panoply of mail, used to wear. Anyhow, it is worth any one's while to read Mr. Flower's book, and learn how to use a little humanity towards the animal of which we are so fond, that we give as much as four thousand guineas for a single specimen, as was done the other day for a young horse—one that a cold or an accident would make of the total value of one sovereign to-morrow, that being about the usual price given for a dead horse, who is as useful almost in death as life, seeing that he becomes glue, buttons, leather, chair-stuffing, covers, tallow, oil, and, last of all, food for the sweet feline animal that goes purring round the basket or barrow of the man who makes our streets resound with the cry of "Mee-eet."

There is a restless body of what Mr. Smollett, the member for Cambridge, called the other day "masculine women and feminine men," always on the look-out for something upon which they can take hold to make a stir—something upon which meetings can be held, and petitions got up, and some soft-hearted M.P.—we might say headed as well—can be induced to move a resolution in the House of Commons. At one time it is woman suffrage, and the rights of the tenderer sex to sit in Parliament; at another time it is the Contagious Diseases Act, and, as it is termed, the State patronage of vice; and now vivisection is the object of attack, which attack is being carried on vigorously. Now, no one would be so brutal as to uphold the practice of performing surgical experiments on living animals as an amusement, or solely for the sake of curiosity; but when, as has been shown, these experiments are really for the benefit of the master animal, man, and important discoveries, such as that of the circulation of the blood, have been made through these experiments, is not the present outcry childish and unnecessary? But these agitators will not listen; they only behave in the same insane way as used the mobs who were urged on against the medical students years back. The difference is that the uneducated mob used to pelt the medical operating rooms with stones. These, whom we may call the educated mob, only pelt with hard words. The very announcement years ago that a body of students were engaged in dissecting the human subject was enough to cause a riot, and yet, but for these practices, where would many a poor,

crushed, bruised, or broken sufferer be after some terrible railway accident? A surgeon must minutely and from observation, not book lore, know the position of every nerve, artery, vein, and tendon, and surely there is a certain amount of wisdom to be obtained from the experiences of the vivisectionists, however great the outcry against them may become.

For any number of years past there has been in all boys' own books and young men's companions the description of an outdoor game called *La Crosse*, played by the Canadians, and said to have been originally the national sport of the North American Indian. For all these years this game of ball has remained in abeyance. Nobody cared to take it up and play it. Game after game has been introduced or invented to supplement cricket: we have bowled, we have played *Les Graces* with hoops, croquet, tennis, racquet, lawn tennis, or *Sphairistike*, and Badminton, but somehow *La Crosse* did not go down. To show us of what the game is capable, some enterprising people have brought over a team of Iroquois Indians and Canadians, who play the game, it is to be supposed, in all its native beauty. The Indians dress themselves *à la campagne* for these occasions, and they are admired by thousands; while, to give them extra popularity, they have been taken down to Windsor to play before the Queen, to whom the Howling Wind, or the Drifting Snow, or the Swift-legged Antelope, or the Flying Tortoise, or some other Indian swell, presented an address. This was, of course, written on birch bark, and, we presume, bore the token of the Indian tribe. It is to be hoped that her Majesty took a more pleasant view of "Mr. Lo"—as the Americans call the typical Indian, from the poem beginning "Lo, the poor Indian"—than did the late Mr. Artemus Ward's itinerant showman. "A. Ward" was robbed by an Indian, who bade him an affectionate farewell, and said they would meet again in the happy hunting grounds. "A. Ward" expressed his belief that if they did there would be "a fite." He also declared that "Injuns" were "pizen" wherever found.

The Earthquake at Lisbon.

OLD Lisbon's earthquake formed a mighty hollow,
And in gaping managed half its folk to swallow;
New Lisbon swallowed our investors' savings,
And the steam tram burst midst the choused ones' ravings.

Though a grand concession, by the Great Saldanha,
Was given as freely as the Hebrew manna,
We had blessed, not cursed, this financial pant,
Had it gorged Saldanha, and then gulped the Grant.

WE have worn a pair of Mr. W. J. Almond's new Patent Stocking Suspenders for over a month, and shall never think of wearing garters again on any account. The stocking is kept up just as well as with a garter, perhaps better; and certainly it is more easy and comfortable, and, doctors say, much more beneficial, especially for those who suffer from varicose veins. Mr. Almond informs us that they may be had of any first-class hosiery or draper in the kingdom, or he would send them by post for 2d. extra from his address, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Price—Children's, 1s. 6d.; Young Ladies', 2s.; Ladies', 3s.

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—THE "RUSH O' LOVELY NAN TO THE HEAD."

BUSINESS at the Lovely Nan had continued lively. If anything it had increased, and demanded more of Mrs. Pouter's care than ever. The rosy widow with the dancing black ringlets almost lived in the bar; and what with the fumes of the wines and spirits, and the want of exercise, continued to plump up to a degree that took every remaining crease out of her black satin, and left her as ripe and round and shiny as one of her own lemons.

Boatman Jacob admitted that "she growed a finer ooman every hour of her life, and did it that fast as you might see her at it."

His admiration grew, too; but he was slow and lazy, and not a man who found it easy to express his feelings. Those little pig's eyes of his said nothing. That broad, flabby face was dumb. The broad thumbs and pudgy fingers had no eloquence in them; and as to the big tongue in the big mouth—which, in spite of its dimensions, seemed a size too small for its occupant—it was far more expert in turning a quid than in turning a compliment, and whatever it might begin to say to the buxom widow, always ended in asking for something more to drink.

So things went on much as before. The great silver watch hanging over the snuggery fire afforded a pretext for frequent visits thither. It had to be kept wound up, and it had to be set right (never was such a watch of its size and repute for wanting to be set right), and it was, of course, convenient to see the time by.

Increase of admiration is apt to beget a jealousy of the thing admired. This might account for the impression which slowly formed in Jacob's mind—it was a mind in which ideas were all of slow growth—that while he went on caring more and more for the widow Pouter, the widow Pouter went on caring less and less for him. He did not seem so welcome as of old. The snug chats they used to have, none the pleasanter, though they might end in the unsatisfactory conclusion that "There was Joe," grew less frequent, and were certainly less prolonged; but this might in part be attributable to the increase of business.

"But," Joe would argue with himself, "thof it's nat'ral as a ooman's 'ed should be turned wi' customers, there's no call for her to up and off when the customers aint there, and the bar's that quiet as you might hear a pin drop."

This conviction of a change in Mrs. Pouter, once formed, rapidly grew, and it did not add to Jacob's liveness as a companion, in the sanded parlour on the other side of the bar, to which he was still welcome when he chose to honour it with his presence; though—such is the tormenting nature of jealous doubt—he questioned whether even the welcome there was as cordial as it had been.

Of this parlour, Jack Faroe had become a regular frequenter. The sullen, taciturn stranger was still regarded with some mistrust; but it was wearing off. The mystery as to who he was, and whence he came, hung about him yet. But it was generally agreed that

the man who could drink the rum he could, and with the happy effect it produced on him, could not be "a bad un at heart," and he was tolerated accordingly.

Jacob and he remained on friendly terms in their relation of landlord and lodger, which relation Mrs. Pouter was good enough to inquire into and approve; and doubtless, for Jacob's sake, she was pleased to take the stranger into favourable consideration, and to admit that, though odd, he looked honest, and had been a fine man in his time, which, considering that she had the advantage of him by several years, was becomingly gracious.

What she could not quite understand, and what Jacob was unable to enlighten her on, was the point as to who Faroe was, and how he got a living. He had come no one knew whence; and though he appeared to have money—certainly money enough to live on, and keep himself in rum with—he had no ostensible livelihood, and it was difficult to surmise why he remained in Wapping.

Being a seafaring man, it was natural to suppose that he had intentions in that direction; but when Jacob ventured to ask whether he might happen to be waiting for a ship, he simply answered "No."

To other questions affecting himself, he gave similarly unsatisfactory answers.

That he had certain objects in view was obvious; but he took no one into his confidence.

What made it more mysterious was that he would sometimes disappear for several days, without any warning of his intention to do so, and would return suddenly without a word of explanation, and resume his ordinary way of life, as if he had only returned from an afternoon's stroll.

Had he been more easy of approach, Jacob would have taken him into his confidence in respect to Mrs. Pouter, and the points in her conduct which troubled him; but Jack Faroe was hardly to be beguiled into accepting confidences. If he had any sympathy for others, he stowed it away in what he would have called the hold of his heart; and in his gruff, self-contained, rum-absorbing way, was as little susceptible of impressions as a ship's figure-head.

Once Jacob ventured in his cunning way to approach the delicate subject which engaged so much of his slow mind.

He ventured to ask what, in a general way, Faroe might happen to think of the buxom widow?

The reply came after a long contemplation of a series of smoke-rings as they ascended from the glowing bowl of Faroe's pipe, to the effect that in his judgment she was "Much of a muchness, and not bad as widows go."

This was not encouraging, as the manner in which it was delivered did not lend cordiality to the simple terms of the observation; consequently Jacob dropped the subject, and the two relapsed into silence, which, as is often the case with men of this class, remained for the rest of the evening almost unbroken.

The boatman's uneasiness, which grew day by day, was in nowise relieved by the conduct of his boy Joe. There had never been much cordiality between father and son, for Jacob's heart did not positively gush with affection, and Joe's bringing up had not been one to develop the finer qualities of his nature, if finer points there were to relieve its pervading coarseness. His

drowned mother had vitiated his system by the vitriol which, in the guise of gin, pervaded her own, and had rendered his infant life a terror from the paroxysms of passion to which she was subject. Jacob had, after the woman's death, left him to the streets; his home life being one of semi-starvation, tempered by missiles, in the form of quart pots, three-legged stools, and other articles ready to hand, as correctives for insolence or misbehaviour. That the boy should have grown up stunted, sullen, crafty, and reckless, was perhaps hardly matter of wonder.

Being now of an age when he ought to have been a comfort, Joe was, on the contrary, a source of perpetual irritation and mistrust to the parental breast. His insolence was only equalled by his craft. The father, sowing cruelty, had reaped hatred; the son, reared a savage, had developed all the vices and few of the virtues pertaining to the savage state.

There was, therefore, cause for apprehension when Joe suddenly began to disport himself in a singular fashion. He would seize opportunities of pouncing on Jacob at unsuspected moments, and indulge in mysterious exclamations. Overtaking him in the street, he would remark—

"My eyes! They aint a-goin' of it neither! Oh, no! Not at all! Certainly not. Oh, dear no!"

The pointing of his thumb over his shoulder, as if to indicate the direction in which the persons concerned might be looked for, was all the explanation vouchsafed, and he would hurry away.

At another time, he would open the door of Jacob's sitting-room sufficiently wide to admit of his head being thrust in, and give expression to a series of taunts in this manner:

"Easy does it! Two to one on slowcoach, and no flies! He aint a-roundin' on yer, guvner, he aint. And she aint a 'elpin on him. Not if they knows it. Oh, no! Not if they knows it, they aint."

This sort of thing was alike irritating and full of mystery. But Jacob knew his first-born too well to think of demanding anything like an explanation which he would not have got. On the taunting being repeated, he revenged himself by hurling a heavy boot at the retreating head of the youth, which was effectual in silencing him for that time.

Brooding over his treatment at the widow's hands, and the inexplicable character of his son's utterances, Jacob one evening strolled from his boat station by the river-side toward the Lovely Nan. No great alacrity urged on his heavy steps, for he did not anticipate the cordial greetings of old times, and the impression had slowly forced itself on his slow mind that the arrangements of life are unsatisfactory, and upon the whole yield those who assent to them far less happiness than misery, especially in the long run—that is to say, when experience of them is at all protracted.

Coming in sight of the Lovely Nan in the fading light of the closing day, he noticed that the lights had just been lit, and was taking a leisurely survey of the well-known exterior—as is the habit of slow minds in regard to objects quite familiar to them—when his attention was suddenly arrested by an object of some interest.

The bay window of Mrs. Pouter's snuggerly overlooked a little court. It was some six feet from the

ground, and had the advantage of a little trellis-work, in which the lady kept a few flowers blooming in pots. Without going into the court, it was impossible to look in at the window, and the feat was then only possible to a very tall man.

On this occasion, not a very tall man, but a particularly dumpy boy, had ventured into the court, and was craning his neck to look in at the window. The boy in question was standing on his toes on an up-turned stable bucket, and was evidently absorbed in what he beheld.

Jacob's blood boiled.

It was like a desecration of his lady's bower, which no true liegeman could possibly suffer.

With both fists doubled up so that he might be prepared to hit out right and left, he stole across the road, entered the court, and was about to dispose of the offender in a summary fashion, when, to his surprise, he recognized in the offender his own son Joe!

At the same instant Joe recognized his father, and on doing so, first dodged an imaginary blow, and then held up his forefinger as a warning to him to be cautious and discreet.

Jacob was puzzled.

Nor was his bewilderment the less when Joe cautiously descended from his elevation, and invited his parent to ascend the bucket. It was much easier for the lad to drop to the ground than it was for the heavy boatman to raise himself so that he might be able to peer into the window.

"Well, but what's up, Joe, what's up?" he kept whispering.

"Oh, nothing. Not at all. Certainly not," was the enigmatical response.

And as it was spoken, Jacob, by dint of much puffing and scrambling, and vigorous exertions in the way of lunges and hoists on the part of his son, succeeded in balancing himself on the bucket, and holding himself there by means of a vigorous grasp at the trellis-work about the window.

Thus elevated, he gave a hasty glance through the flower-pots at the snuggerly in which he had spent so many happy moments, and there beheld a sight which caused him to reel, and well-nigh to descend like an avalanche on the youth, who was engaged in propping him up in the manner of a buttress.

As it was, a piteous groan escaped his lips, and Joe grinned from ear to ear.

What met Jacob's view was simply this: Before the fire of the snuggerly stood Mrs. Pouter, engaged in one of the most innocent occupations in life. She was simply engaged in boiling eggs. In one hand she grasped the handle of the tin fool's-cap in which she was wont to "take the chill off" ale and stout for delicate drinkers, and in the other she held a ladle with which she was prepared to lift the eggs from the water in which they were fiercely wobbling, as soon as they might be considered done.

Against an occupation so purely innocent and domestic, nothing could have been urged had it happened that she was pursuing it alone. But it did happen that she was not pursuing it alone. No! At the moment Jacob's eyes rested on the scene, he became horribly conscious that Mrs. Pouter had a companion, and that companion was no other than his mysterious lodger—Jack Faroe!

Ay, Jack! close by her side, so close that one arm encircled her waist—as far as it would go—resting unimproved on the “gathers” of the lustrous satin, while his other arm was elevated so that he might with the greater convenience consult the watch—Jacob’s own silver watch from over the mantelpiece, which he held close to his eyes in order that the wobbling eggs might not be over-done.

It was atrocious. It was infamous.

The boatman felt his fat cheeks grow scarlet with indignation, with a bitter sense of wrong and a thirst for vengeance at the adding of insult to injury thus exhibited.

His first impulse was to crash in the window with his fists; his next to watch and see how much further things would go. And he had just arrived at this safe if not particularly valiant determination, when crack, smash, down went the bucket, reduced to fragments by his weight; down also came the trellis-work and the flower-pots, and Jacob found himself lying on his back, with a feeling as if the street had sprung up and dealt him a severe blow in the head, while Joe ran off screaming with laughter.

The noise of the falling flower-pots aroused the guilty lovers in the moment of their security.

Darting to the window, Faroe threw up the sash and looked out; the perfidious Pouter, waddling thitherward also, thrust her head forth almost at the same moment, and thus both beheld the prostrate form of the boatman, like a turtle on its back, striking out with both hands in self-defence against whatever might happen.

The indignation of the landlady found expression in words.

“As I live,” she exclaimed, with a fierce outburst of indignation, “it’s that fool Jacob has been playing the spy upon us, like a great sneak as he is!”

“Jacob, is it?” cried Faroe. “I’ll Jacob him.”

And, springing from the window at a bound, he called on the prostrate boatman to rise and “Come on!” giving significance to his challenges with occasional kicks. But Jacob was too good a general to accept the invitation; and, lying snugly where he was, contented himself with a reiterated statement that only a coward would hit a man when he was down. Faroe, a violent man, would probably have done the other an injury, had not the voice of love called on him from the window to desist.

With one parting kick, he obeyed.

The victim gave a howl, and was in the act of rising, when a missile caught him between the eyes, and laid him flat again. The throwing of that missile was the unkindest cut of all. It was no other than his own watch from over the mantelpiece, flung by the hand of the woman he loved, and who immediately thereafter shut down the window and disappeared.

Wounded alike in body and affections, the wretched lover picked himself up and crawled away home—aching, crestfallen, and thoroughly miserable.

And this was the meaning of Joe Ember’s sarcastic allusion when next day he, as we know, informed Edmund Harcourt that his father was laid up with “a rush o’ Lovely Nan to his ’ed.”

CHAPTER XXIX.—CONCERNS ZERINA.

IT was always high jinks with the Dormer-Pagets. They lived in a whirl of excitement that had no

ending. They ate, drank, and were merry all the days of their lives; and all the nights, too, for that matter, for they seemed never to need rest, and did so much sleep in off-moments that any regular indulgence in it appeared superfluous.

This was so in the winter, but as the spring meetings came on the whirl intensified.

If they had any pursuit out of which they ostensibly lived, it was that of betting; and the different racing events were to them of such vital interest, of such overwhelming importance, that they could not comprehend the indifference of the outside or non-sporting world, or how people consented to live in ignorance of the “odds,” and without the excitement of the “tissue.”

Life, they held, must be a very humdrum story to such people.

As the spring came, Mrs. Dormer-Paget burst forth in all the splendours of gorgeous raiment, and clothed herself with the colours of the rainbow as a daily garment. Nothing was too bright or too decided in tone for that superb woman, who moved in sunset-clouds of glory, receiving the admiration and homage of all.

Having taken a decided fancy to Zerina—based, it must be admitted, on the impression that she acted as a foil to her charms—the lady was full of excitement at the idea of the pleasure in store for the “dear child,” in being torn about all over the country in connection with the Spring meetings.

Had she any other object beside that of giving pleasure?

It is hard to say.

She did not confess to any, at all events, even on an occasion when such confession might have been made with safety. It was on the night on which the news of the elopement of Aunt Effra had reached Knowles Park, that on coming down dressed for dinner, and passing through the conservatory, she was startled by a dark figure stepping out from among the magnolias and confronting her.

“A moment, if you please,” said a quiet voice, while the finger of a gloved hand detained her.

It was Marco.

“Dear, dear, how you frighten one!” the lady exclaimed, giving a little start. “What is it?”

“Simply this: I am leaving London for a few days—it may be a week. Will you take charge of Zerina during that time? My house will be closed.”

“Your house—your hobgoblin Den of Mystery, you mean!” she replied, laughing.

“Well, well”—he was a little impatient—“you will take sole charge of the dear child?”

Mrs. Dormer-Paget raised her eyes to the black orbs of the Italian, and there was an expression of seriousness on her face wholly unusual.

“We should understand each other, Marco,” she said.

“With all my heart.”

“I mean as to your motive in the strange part you are playing with this girl—your child. I can comprehend that you wish her to see a little of life, after bringing her up a prisoner in that hobgoblin place of yours; and I fancy——”

“What?”

For she had hesitated.

“In a word, that your poverty has induced you to

throw her into temptations, from which you hope to reap the benefit. Is this so?"

"Suppose," he replied, "that I simply do not want the girl to grow up awkward, shy, and ill-bred—that I desire to see her a lady, with the manners and bearing of one. Suppose——"

She stopped him.

"Marco—Marco!" she exclaimed, shaking her head, "why should we fool one another? When you gave Zerina into my charge, do you think I didn't know as well as if you had used the words that you meant—'Take her; she will be of use to you as a decoy, as a means of keeping your circle about you; and in return you can do me the favour of taking the crisp edge off her delicacy, and blunting that refinement and squeamishness which I may find an impediment to my plans for her or for myself—in the future.' Was not that the bargain which there was no need to put into words?"

He smiled; but under that smile there was a grim setting of the features that belied it, and lent to his face an expression amounting to the sardonic.

Looking at him, Mrs. Dormer-Paget drew back with a shudder.

Just such a look had distorted his face on the night when he placed Zerina in her charge. Just such an effect it had produced on her.

What could be the meaning of this? She knew the man, and mistrusted him. She felt that there was some mystery, some secret horror which she could not fathom, and the very vagueness of it terrified her.

"You do not answer me," she said after a moment's pause.

"No? And if not—is it necessary? If my looks said all this, why should I use words to confirm it? But think as you will. I am content that the child should remain in your hands, if you will only burden yourself with the charge of her. For the rest—we shall not quarrel."

Their eyes met. They understood.

"You will dine with us?" the lady asked.

"Impossible. I have a particular engagement. Good-bye."

They shook hands in a quick, nervous, feverish way, and Marco tripped off through the conservatory, singing a snatch of a song with a soft, silky voice.

Mrs. Dormer-Paget did not heed, though the dinner gong had sounded in the hall. She stopped trifling with the glossy leaves of a camellia, and all the colour was gone from her cheeks as she thought—

"Would to God I had never seen him again. He swore in the old, old days to have his vengeance of me, and these men never forget, never forgive. And now he seeks me out, and trusts his child to me. Why? Why should he do this? What does it all mean?"

She took a step or two toward the door; then stopped again, so strong was a strange, creeping, undefined sense of fear upon her.

"It means danger," she muttered between set teeth.

As she spoke, a light foot tripped towards her, and it was Zerina's voice that asked why she delayed? It was Zerina's arm that encircled her waist. And those were the blue eyes of the innocent girl that, looking into her face, saw with a kind of awe a change that had come into it.

"You are not well?" the girl asked.

"Not well! Nonsense! Why is one never to be a moment fatigued? These flowers are poisonously oppressive."

They hurried out together.

Dinner was waiting, and the host was not a little impatient. Not that he was hungry. People of his stamp have no appetites. They tell you mournfully that they can't eat; no, not even after the stimulating effect of a dozen glasses of sherry and bitters! As if that compound, or any other like it, ever did give a man an appetite in this world! What made the delay the more irritating was that Colonel Duplex was present, and punctuality was part of his fastidious system. He was looking radiant—for his years; faultless in his attire, and gay and sprightly with that gaiety and sprightliness which society recognizes as indispensable in society, and is put on by the experienced quite as much a matter of course as a dress shirt and white kid gloves. Had the polished colonel's heart been breaking, he would have smiled; had he just received the news that he was a ruined man, he would have had all his armoury of small-talk in perfect order—his *bon-mot* for the soup, his little anecdote to season the fish, his dash of scandal for the *entrées*, his wicked little jest that sparkled as brightly as the champagne with the joint, and his lively sally that gave a zest to the sweets; to say nothing of the broad joke, so daintily told that its breadth was heightened by the telling, ready for the time when the ladies rose, and the gentlemen settled down over their glasses of old port.

This evening the colonel was, if possible, a trifle more vivacious than usual; and he was soon in special favour with the lady of the house, in consequence of a trifle in the form of a bracelet, worth a thousand guineas or so, which he audaciously clasped about her plump arm under the table as they sat together.

"It was too bad," said Mrs. Dormer-Paget, her eyes sparkling with gratification all the while; "besides—why did he not give the diamonds to Zerina?"

"Diamonds to children!" cried the colonel, with affected horror. "My dear madam, diamonds and immature beauty would be like horse-radish with veal!"

As the lady was disposed to be gratified, the explanation, helped by that delicate insinuation about immature beauty, entirely satisfied her, and she did not resent the attentions the colonel paid to Zerina the rest of the evening, though those attentions were very marked and absorbing. And they were most gratifying to the girl, for she was beginning to like him, to enjoy the delicate aroma of his wit, and the unaccustomed spice of his conversation. Besides, he was so delicate in his attentions, which were never of such a nature as to alarm her. They were not the attentions of a lover, but of a devoted parent, and this completely lulled the feeling of alarm with which she had at first been inclined to regard him.

Still further, there was a little secret between them, and this served as a bond of union. The colonel, in his fatherly capacity, had contrived to get her confidence on a most delicate point, that being no other than the one as to whether her fancy had ever been captivated or her heart touched by any of the opposite sex. Thus urged, she had reluctantly admitted that there were two men whom she regarded as the heroes of her early life, and on one of these she had bestowed

the flower of her girlish affection. The men in question were Edmund Harcourt and Randolph Agnew.

This admission had led to many inquiries and artfully guarded questions as to who these young heroes might be. Zerina's answers were not quite satisfactory, partly because she instinctively felt that it would not do to say too much to the colonel about the old house by the river-side, and partly from her really knowing very little about the men. Of Harcourt she could say nothing, except that she believed him to belong to a good family, and her knowledge of Agnew was confined to her having heard that he was in the Foreign Office. At this the colonel pricked up his ears, and soon satisfied himself that he knew the young man slightly, and could easily make it his business to find out more about him. Zerina expressed herself delighted, because—she admitted—Randolph was her favourite. She had regarded him with ever growing affection, and believed that he returned it with very genuine passion.

Thus much having passed between them in the way of confidence already, the way was smoothed on this occasion to some very pleasant talk, for Zerina was delighted at being able to speak of Randolph Agnew, and the colonel appeared to derive a paternal pleasure in being favoured with her confidence.

However, it was impossible that they could be together all the evening in a mixed company, especially as cards always formed a feature of Dormer-Paget evenings, and the colonel was a brilliant player. So they were separated for a time, and the colonel had spent several hours in the display of his brilliance at vingt-un, when happening to look up at a critical moment in the game, he saw Zerina in the arched doorway, making quiet signals to him.

Most men would have thought twice before they interrupted the colonel in his game; but with the happy audacity of youth, Zerina had no hesitation. She did not know enough for alarm.

With a muttered curse, but a smiling face, the colonel rose and went toward her.

"One moment," said she. "I am sorry to intrude; but see—here is a note from Randolph; the first he ever wrote me. What should I do?"

Her companion took the paper, and glanced over its brief contents:

"Zerina, dear, something has happened. I cannot explain. I am most anxious to see you, and at once. Can you contrive to come to me quietly, and without exciting remark? The bearer may be trusted. Yours most devotedly,
"RANDOLPH."

The colonel looked grave.

"This is singular," he said, "and I hope all right. You did well to take me into your confidence. Had you consulted the Pagets, it would have involved the necessity of explanation, and explanation means a scene."

"Yes," replied the girl; "I could not have told them everything; and besides, they might have opposed my going at once."

"Exactly."

"But you don't think there would be any harm?"

He reflected, apparently weighing the point maturely in his mind.

"No, child," he then said, "there can scarcely be

any harm—any danger, that is. But it would be indiscreet for you to go away alone with a stranger. Dempster, my servant, had best go with you. A cab will be the thing, and the two must manage to sit on the box-seat. But I will first see the messenger."

He left for that purpose, but soon returned, whispering that all was right—that the servant had instructions, and the cab was waiting. Thus assured, Zerina went off to her room, hastily attired herself, and stole downstairs to find everything as stated.

The man Dempster opened the door of the cab, and, she supposed, took his seat on the box; and of this she took little heed, all her thoughts being absorbed in speculation as to what Randolph might have to impart to her.

The ride was a long one, but at length the cab stopped at the door of a mansion in a square. A stranger let down the steps of the cab, and in answer to her inquiry for Dempster, replied that he was inside the house. Suspecting nothing, but all anxiety, she entered, admitted by a man servant, and was shown upstairs into a handsome back drawing-room. There she was requested to take a seat, while her name was announced.

"Is Mr. Agnew at home?" she asked.

The man stared, hesitated, and replied in the affirmative. Then left.

The room was so sumptuously furnished that Zerina began to speculate on the sort of appointments people held in the Foreign Office. She had always thought Randolph was a poor man—for a gentleman; but the evidences of wealth surrounded her on every side. Drawing a chair in front of a blazing fire, she sat there very complacently thinking, until after a long interval it struck her that it was strange Randolph did not make his appearance. Still she waited, and still no one came.

Then something like the shadow of a misgiving began to steal over her mind.

Could there be anything wrong?

Surely not! Perhaps they had forgotten her: servants are so careless. She would venture to ring, and remind them that she waited.

Having conceived this idea, she looked round for the ordinary means of communicating with servants. They were wanting. Two circles on the paper, one on either side of the fire, showed that the bell handles had been removed.

Startled at this, she rose and looked helplessly about her, then resolved to go to the door and call, in the hope of attracting some notice.

But in this purpose she was also defeated.

The door was locked!

AN inquisitive young man visited the State prison in New York, and, among other questions, asked a girl the cause of her being in such a place. Her answer was, that she "stole a water-mill, and went back after the stream that turned the mill, and was arrested." The young man left immediately.

AT Massachusetts there are three churches, the minister of each of which rejoices in the name of Wright. One lives in the upper part of the town, one in the lower, and the third at the mills; so the people have dubbed them as "Upwright," "Downwright," and "Millwright."

The Man in the Open Air.

THE PLEASURES AND PURSUITS OF ANGLING.

WHAT a theme is this! The more we indulge in it, the more expansive it becomes. Nor is this truth confined to the angler, for all who are acquainted with the fishers' society are—although, perhaps, apathetic to the pursuit itself—drawn imperceptibly, and almost against their will, into the vortex of its fascinations. It would be strange indeed if it were not so, for a pursuit of such innocence and simplicity, and yet imbued with such suggestive and elevating attributes, could scarcely fail of winning admirers beyond the circle of its especial disciples. Nature's volume in an angler's ramble—the more when the reward of toil—penetrates into the heart, and mingles pleasantly with his daily life. Those who are acquainted with the society of anglers must be dull indeed if they do not detect the influence of such communing with the eloquent waters and their surroundings; in the placidity of the manner of its devotees; in the humanity of their instincts; in the justice of their conduct, and in the general steadiness and attention to their private and public duties.

Let us, however, leave our friends who are not anglers, and appeal to those who are. Is not the weight of our occupation lessened, the excellence and quality of our work increased—nay, sometimes more than doubled—by the newness and vigour of spirit infused by our open-air pursuit? Then, if you are masters, love and encourage angling; if you have masters, pursue it for your mutual sakes; if you are independent and wealthy, follow it, in its ripest sense, as a fitting example to others. But, brother, let us ask whether we are anglers in the full and pure sense of the term, or are we merely fishermen? Here is a distinction it would be well to ponder over. Do we see more than our float? Do we think of more than our spoil? Is the marketable value of our fish the be-all of our desires, and is its greater weight looked at through the tradesman's scales? Or are a blank day and an empty basket made profitable, by the glorious appreciation of all around us, to the landscape of our souls? Is it Nature we seek, or only what we could obtain at the same cost from the slabs of the town market-place? Is our pursuit suggestive? does it bring us home more cheered in heart and more elastic in limb? or, on the contrary, does it weary us, render us dull and morose when we return to our fellows? These are crucial tests. May we not venture to say that, on the contrary, we have on our return something of interest to tell them—how this and that occurred—how we lost a large fish by a careless fault, and how another one got caught by its own—the amusing episodes we had with the countrymen we met with—the milking-maid who, so early in the morning, proffered us that acceptable lacteal draught—of the bluff but good-natured farmer who opened his gate to us that we might save a long round to the water-side, and bade us come in as we returned, to have a pipe and a glass with him—or how we had a run from a monster pike, and another from a bull in yonder mead, and how the brute taught us, at a push, to jump and clear a ditch with the most able steeplechaser? Still more happy is the angler, as Kingsley tells us, “who is also a naturalist; for as he roves in pursuit of his game, over hills

or up the beds of streams, where no one but a sportsman ever thinks of going, he will be certain to see things noteworthy which even the scientific naturalist would never find, simply because he could never guess that they were there to be met with.”

This genial writer does not allude merely to the rare birds which may be seen—the curious facts as to the habits of fish which are thus to be observed, great as these pleasurable surprises are—but to the scenery, the weather, its vegetation, and the living habits of its many other denizens. The angler!—what an exhaustive treasury of wonders lies at his feet in the subaqueous world of the smallest mountain streamlet! All the laws which mould a world are there busy, fattening his trout for him, and making them rise to the fly by strange electric influences at one hour more than another.

How sorrowful is that time to an angler, if mental resources fail him, when the fish will not respond to his line of invitation! He may then whistle for a wind and its accompanying ripple, and whistle in vain; but Æolus may be as sulky as the fish, and in “blowing the wind,” he but ruffles his own temper and not that of the water. What then would he do? Not throw himself indolently on the sward; but, leaving his rod alone to idleness, walk quietly along the side of the river, and watch the development and perfection of the countless exquisite plants which bathe so luxuriously upon its margin. The gathering of a few specimens of these, and carefully placing them in his hat, serves not only to keep his head cool, but provides a store for examination when the home or the club is reached.

Those who are earnest in their wish to extend their mental pleasures must know something beyond what is shown by superficial scales and fins, and, not content with weighing their spoil with pride and handling it with boasting, be yet more intimate with their anatomy, and why and wherefore, according to their formation, they differ in their habits one from another.

To the angler, the value of even a moderate acquaintance with the habits and nature of his prey cannot be exaggerated. Not only is it of the greatest practical use, from the insight which it gives him into instincts, food, spawning season, &c. of the several fish, and, consequently, into the best means of taking them; but it immeasurably increases, as it most undoubtedly secures, the pleasure of success. On the other hand, the least trifling results of a day's sport have to the angler-naturalist an interest of their own, apart from all notions of *avoirdupois*. He is able to identify the various species he meets with—many varieties of which would otherwise pass unrecognized—to determine their sexes, ages, and conditions, and to read with an intelligent eye this marvellous and beautiful page in Nature's tome; and thus, be it understood, it may often be in his power to observe and accurately describe characteristics and peculiarities of the highest interest to science. “Notwithstanding, however, these inducements,” says Pennell, “it is astonishing how many there are, calling themselves sportsmen, who are content to remain all their lives simply killers of fish—of the habits, idiosyncrasies, and even of the very names of which they are often ignorant, particularly of the salmon and carp families.” Is it, then, too much to ask that we should not grudge the necessary time to a pursuit which, if thus woven with its attributive knowledge, will assuredly repay us fiftyfold by years of after-

gratification? But this is a theme which branches off in every direction—so grows and fructifies under the pen of all who feel its benignant influence—that is, of all those who would raise the mere angler's eyes occasionally from his quill, and cast them with inquiring glance around him—that it equally reminds us that our space affords but a short article, and not an exhaustive essay, if that were possible, upon our text.

We are told, however, by an authoritative voice, that anglers, to their credit, are now aspiring to better things; and that many are endeavouring really to qualify themselves for a high name in the art of the first fishing nation in the world. England is, indeed, pre-eminently the land of the rod and line—the fisherman's Paradise; and Norfolk, viewed as the school of the tyro, is its centre. There is no other nation where the gentle craft is so thoroughly understood and appreciated, and where everything around unites to make a man an angler, and to keep him so. Is he a bottom fisher? Here he may wander unchallenged by the margin of the ever-gliding Yare or Bure or Waveney. Is he a troller or spinner? In Norfolk and Suffolk he will find broad meres and stately rivers that might ravish the soul of a Nobbes. A fly-fisher? An hour or so's rail will carry him on to a Dove, a Derwent, or a Coquet, where he will meet with trout and grayling and the Goddess of Scenery, with whom he may muse away life "in the green gleam of dewy-tasselled trees."

Yes, England is the Paradise of the angler, and a love of angling thence becomes inseparable from a love of home and a love of Nature. And, as Badham so gracefully expresses it, "to England, in after-life, wherever he may have travelled and fished in the meanwhile, he will be delighted to return and revisit the scenes of his boyhood; the banks of each well-known stream and unchanged lake; the fraternal pond; and the boat of 'auld lang syne' rising two inches in the boathouse to greet him—that dear old boat to which he used furtively to creep, and, loosing her rusty and trusty chain from its mooring, confide his mistress's name and the earliest efforts of his muse to the silent scene! The mere sight of a fishing rod in after-times is often sufficient, without the aid of other accessories, to awaken pleasant memories of the past; and, if there must be a touch of melancholy blending with these agreeable associations—associations which the chances of life, or of death, may perhaps make it impossible that we should ever renew—depend upon it, it is not the melancholy which corrodes, but rather the tender sentiment which soothes the heart where it rests, and leaves its owner a kindlier and a better man."

Many charges have been made against angling. It has in turn been termed cruel and idle. More gifted pens than mine have refuted these attacks, made mostly by otherwise able men, but by men who physically were incapable of indulging in our pursuit. Let every angler answer for his brother, Is he cruel, is he slothful, is he worse than other men? Slothful! The angler rises early in the morning, a practice which strangles dissipation. He traverses large tracts of the country, a labour which constitutions enervated by excesses could not encounter. He requires a coolness of judgment, a clearness of perception, and a steadiness of hand, which are not usually discernible amongst the constitutional peculiarities of the idle and the dissolute. The angler is usually a man, by habit and instinct, of a genial dis-

position, recognising brotherhood without distinction of rank or riches, who is at the same time imbued with a pleasing vivacity of temper, the best evidence of the placidity within; of a poetical, or at least a humorous and conciliating turn of mind, forgiving and guiltless of bearing anger or malice. He is taught by his pursuits patiently to await the happy moment of success, not hastily losing it by rushing forth prematurely to seize his prize. He is fertile in expedient, not rashly yielding to despair or forcibly relinquishing an enterprise because of difficulties he will not strive to overcome.

But, in all humility, the above volumes more have been said in praise of angling, and in compliment to anglers. We do but recoin our language, shuffle our terms and sentiments, remould our aphorisms, and set up a statue to the fame of our art composed of the same material. If there were any need to prove this, we have but to turn to writers who have revelled over and over on the same subject; and we may not do better than finish with a quotation from one who lifted up his encomiums upon angling so high as to designate his work, as long ago as 1614, "The Pleasures of Princes; or, Good Men's Recreations. Chapter 1: Of Angling—the Vertue, Use, and Antiquity:—

"Since pleasure is a rapture, or power in this last age, stolen into the hearts of men, and there lodged with such a carefull guard and attendance that nothing is more supreme, or ruleth with greater strength in their affections; and since all are now become the sonnes of pleasure, and every good is measured by the delight it produceth, what worke unto man can be more thankful than the discourse of that pleasure which is most comely, most honest, and giveth the most liberty to Divine meditation; and that, without all question, is the Art of Angling, which, having ever been most hurtlessly necessary, hath been the sport or recreation of God's saints, of most holy fathers, and of many worthy and reverend divines, both dead and at this time breathing.

"For the use thereof (in its owne true and unabused nature) carrieth in it neyther covetousnesse, deceit, nor anger, the three maine spirits which (ever in some ill measure) ruleth in all other pastimes; neyther are they alone predominant without the attendance of their several handmaids, as Theft, Blasphemy or Bloodshed: for in Dice-play, Cards, Bowles, or any sport where money is the goale to which men's minds are directed, what can man's avarice there be accounted other than a familiar robbery, each seeking by deceit to couzen, and spoile other of that blisse of meanes which God has bestowed to support them and their families? As in every contention there must be a better-hood or super-excelling, so in this—such as would make vertue tremble with the imagination. But in this art of angling there is no such evil, no such sinnefule violence, for the greatest thing it coveteth is, for much labour a little fish, hardly so much as will suffice nature in a reasonable stomacke; for the angler must intice, not command his reward, and that which is worthy millions to his contentment, another may buy for a groate in the market. His deceit worketh not upon men, but upon those creatures whom it is lawfull to beguile for our honest recreations or needfull uses, and for all rage and fury it must be so great a stranger to this civill pastime, that if it comes but within view of speculation

thereof, it is no more to be esteemed a pleasure, for every proper good thereof in the very instant faileth, shewing unto all men that will undergoe any delight therein, that it was first invented, taught, and shall for ever be maintained by *Patience* only. And yet I may not say only *Patience*, for her other three sisters have likewise a commanding power in this exercise; for *Justice* directeth, and appointeth out those places where men may with liberty use their sport, and neyther doe injury to their neighbours, nor incur the censure of incivility. *Temperance* layeth downe the measure of the action, and moderateth desire in such good proportion, that no exercise is found in the overflow of their affections. Lastly, *Fortitude* enableth the minde to undergoe the travell and exchange of weathers with a healthful ease, and not to despaire with a little expence of time, but to persevere, with a constant imagination in the end, to obtain both pleasure and satisfaction."

We are tempted to quote yet further from this quaint and now scarce and precious work:—

"Now for the antiquity thereof—for all pleasures, like gentry, are held to be most excellent which is most ancient—it is by some writers sayd to be found out by *Ducallion*, and *Pialia* his wife, after the generall flood; others writ it was the invention of *Saturne*, after the peace concluded betwixt him and his brother *Tytan*; and others that it came from *Bellus*, the son of *Nimrod*, who first invented all holy and vertuous recreations; and all these though they savour of fiction, yet they differ not from truth; for it is certaine that both *Ducallion*, *Saturne*, and *Bellus* are taken for figures of *Noah* and his family, and the invention of the art of angling is truly sayd to come from the sonnes of *Seth*, of which *Noah* was most principall. Thus you see it is good, as having no coherence with evill, worthy of use; inasmuch as it is mixt with a delightful profit, and most ancient, as being the recreation of the fresh Patriarks."

The two first editions of the above were black letter, and ample use has been made of the leading features of the work in subsequent essays by other hands, with more or less or no acknowledgment.

THAT EDITOR.—An editor of my acquaintance, instead of saying, "Four golden-haired little cherubs cluster round my hearthstone and make sunshine for my home; four dainty darlings twine their dimpled arms around my neck, and kiss away the furrows from my brow; four sweet, childish voices carol joyous songs from morn till eve, and fill my heart with melody;" remarks: "Four two-headed youngsters play 'circuit' with my chessmen and 'horsey' with my cane; four ragged urchins upset my inkstand and spill molasses where the carpet—ought to be, but isn't; four noisy, uproarious brats, with noses that need—but don't get—constant handkerchief, make a Babel of my home, take a paperweight to crack 'warnuts' and 'hicky-nuts,' and cry because there are only two drumsticks to each chicken, and two chickens a year.

"'Tis shocking! There are four of 'em!

Thank goodness, there are no more of 'em!"

The monster!

Wanderings in Half-a-Guinea.

BY MAJOR MONK-LAUSEN.

CHAPTER V.—PETER TROMP MARKS DOWN A NEW ANIMAL.

WHEN I saw the man lying on his back, soundly sleeping, with the creature of darkness and silence at his throat, I remembered the vampire bat of another clime; and seizing the thing, whose wings immediately collapsed, I perceived that it was indeed of a similar description, for a drop of blood oozed from a small puncture in the man's neck, which the bat was sucking; and if I had not fortunately wandered that way and interrupted the banquet, I have little doubt but what it would have drained his veins. As it was, no injury had been inflicted, for on gently feeling the sleeper's pulse, I found it strong and regular; so, leaving him undisturbed, I carried the bat, who, having folded its wings, was now no larger than a kitten, to my former sleeping place. I then muzzled it firmly, and having fastened it to my chest, once more composed myself to sleep. My idea was this: my Indian experience had taught me that no mosquito can remain in the breeze of the punkah, and I hoped that the vampire, after all was still for awhile, would renew the waving of his wings and produce a like effect. And this actually happened: the muzzled bat, though unable to fix his teeth in a vein, kept up the hopeless endeavour to do so throughout the night; and to ensure my slumber during this prolonged attempt, resumed and continued the fanning process. At least, I suppose so, for I enjoyed a sound slumber till the sun was well above the horizon; and when at last I was aroused by the stir of my people, I could not at first imagine what the brown, clammy lump, itself now torpid, lying on my breast was. In gratitude for the refreshing nap it had afforded me, I released the bat from its muzzle, and placed it in a tree; for, as we should be many miles from the spot by the following night, there was no fear of its doing any harm.

After this I went down to the marsh, and skirted the edge of it in search of a clear piece of water with a firm bank where I might get a bath; for I had been stung before finding my bat from top to toe, and my inflamed limbs craved such refreshment. It was not long before I found a suitable place, and stripped off my clothes; but as the water was somewhat turbid, I did not dare to take a header, not knowing the depth, which might be insufficient. So I sat on the bank, and slipped cautiously down, feet foremost, so that I could withdraw in time if the bottom proved to be of soft, tenacious mud. My knees were hardly immersed before both legs were seized; and when I tried to draw back, a green head, in which a pair of goggle eyes were set, rose above the surface, and I perceived that my lower limbs were plunged into the throat of an enormous frog. As I endeavoured to draw myself away with my hands, which were planted on the bank, the frog followed, placing two enormous web feet on the firm land also, making the most strenuous efforts to swallow me; and soon he had sucked me in as far as the waist. He had no teeth, or of course I should have been done for presently; but his power of swallow was tremendous, and the sensation of going down was most horrible. I knew that when he got to my arm-

pits he would not be able to suck me in farther, so long as I kept my arms extended, but I could not for long prevent being drawn under water and drowned if it came to that; or, if I could, to have the lower half of my body digested, while the upper was alive and conscious, was a more fearful fate still. What a frog's intestines are composed of, I cannot imagine, for kicking—and you may believe I kicked vigorously—had no effect in making the creature let go.

My nerves were so upset by this utterly unforeseen situation, that I did what I have always made it a rule to avoid, except in the very last emergency—I called loudly for help. Fortunately, my cries attracted attention; and several of my men, headed by Atah, came running towards the spot. Seizing my arms and shoulders, they dragged me high on the shore; the persistent frog refusing to disgorge me, and allowing himself to be drawn up too. It was necessary to cut his jaws down on each side in order to set me free; but, when this was accomplished, I found I had not sustained the slightest damage—on the contrary, all the poison of the mosquito bites was sucked out of the lower half of my body; and the contrast between its white appearance and the red and inflamed state of my upper half was surprising. The process of cutting me out naturally killed the frog; and Peter Tromp, who arrived at the spot while I was dressing, made a most delicious fricassee of its hind legs; which was an appropriate retribution upon it for its impudence in attempting to breakfast off mine.

A night's rest had done Atah and his wife all the good in the world. He was still somewhat bruised and sore, and the neck and shoulder of Piti were considerably swollen; but there was nothing to prevent our continuing our journey towards the hills. Just as we were starting, however, Booboo came running up to me, crying—

"Has milor got the moolah skin?"

"No, Booboo," I said; "it is your business to look after that. It was given into your care, I believe?"

"Never, milor, never. Dried and made sweet yesterday. Booboo told he should have it to carry to-day. Skin not given. Booboo no catch toko for that; no, no!"

I had better here explain the system of discipline which I had established. Every offence was tried by a court composed of four, drawn by lot from the whole party; I, the president, having the casting vote. Not only was the validity of the excuse made by the accused decided upon in this manner, but also the amount of his punishment, which invariably consisted of so many stripes with the toko—a Poopooan instrument of correction, which was composed of a string upon which certain very hard little nuts, about the size of big beads, were threaded at distances of three inches. It looked like a mere toy; but I tried a gentle cut over my own back one day, and perceived that the sting inflicted was very severe. The culprit was made to embrace a tree with his arms and legs, which were secured in that position, and he then received the allotted number of stripes, Atah or Tulu being the executioner, according to the section the offender was in. Should either of these two head-men absolutely require punishment, it was to be inflicted by my hand, or that of Peter Tromp, alone. But importance and responsibility had given them a certain amount of self-respect, and I had

reason to hope that such a step would never be forced upon me. The carelessness and laziness of the rank and file, however, did sometimes demand a check, and then the lad whipped was pitilessly chaffed by his comrades, who laughed when he called out during the infliction, and quizzed him at the bivouac fire in the evening afterwards; mimicking his cries and contortions, offering him something soft to sit upon, and behaving generally like a pack of schoolboys. That was what Booboo meant by catching toko. Tromp came up, and confirmed the lad's account. The skin of the moolah, a fine male, had been carefully stripped off and brought to Peter, who had pegged it out some hundred yards to leeward of our bivouac, for the ants to pick it clean of those particles of adhering flesh which could not well be scraped off. But, on going to the place when the packing up commenced, the skin had disappeared. I was rather vexed to lose the trophy, and repaired at once to the spot, to try and see what had become of it. I suspected the monkeys, who are always up to some mischief or another. Why should not the old fellow, who must have learned to milk the cow from watching some human being, have taken it into his head to imitate his cousins in the matter of wearing clothes, and chosen this fine and beautifully-marked skin as a nice robe to begin with? While I was peering up into the trees and speculating thus, one of the men, who was hidden from me in the bush, called out—

"There goes the skin, walking off of itself."

A long study of natural phenomena has cured me of scepticism. I am not an incredulous man; but this statement did not strike me as one to be taken literally. So I ran round to see what the fellow meant, and I certainly was taken aback. The skin was moving slowly along the ground, to all appearance by volition, for no motive agent was visible. On going up to it, however, certain dark bodies could be distinguished at the edge; and when I turned a corner up with my foot, several ants as big as stag beetles rushed upon it, and nipped it so severely that I felt the pinches through the boots. As they were swarming up to the less protected portions of my body, I beat a hasty retreat, brushing off the assailants with a stick as I went. One of them, however, succeeded in reaching my arm, from which he immediately bit out a piece as big as a marrowfat pea, inflicting by the operation the sharpest pang I had experienced since I was persuaded, as a boy, to thrust a red-hot needle into the nerve of a hollow tooth, with a view to its destruction. The exclamation I uttered must have been audible at a great distance. I will not repeat it. If Uncle Toby's lenient recording angel was not on duty at the time, I hope that the one who filled his place was too much shocked to take it down. But my belief is that the Archbishop of Canterbury himself would have said something naughty upon the occasion.

All the party collected together, and providing ourselves with long poles, we began to belabour the skin, from under which a swarm of these monstrous ants immediately emerged, and soon darkened the whole surface of the object which they were carrying off bodily to their nest. Fortunately their large size enabled us, for the most part, to avoid them; but one or two more having got bitten, and dancing and screaming about frantic with the pain, I ordered all efforts to save the trophy, which was much damaged, to be

relinquished; and when the ants found themselves undisturbed, they soon quieted down, and resumed their carrying operations.

As I had never met with so large a description of the industrious insect before, I determined to delay our departure for a short time, for the purpose of watching their operations; and found that the skin brought up the rear of a long procession—or rather, two processions—one perpetually going, the other coming. They did not straggle at all from the path they had chosen, so that it was easy to stand at the side quite close, so long as we were quiet, and watch them. But I could not make out the reason for their thus going and coming, and am unable to add any facts of interest to the stock of the ant department of natural history.

Peter Tromp drew my attention to another curiosity, however, which seems to me worth mentioning. He had perceived every now and then that some little dark object came down from above upon the line of ants, and immediately shot up again. The attempt to discover what this might be was foiled several times; but at last we observed one in the act of descending, and saw that it was a black, hairy spider, with a body not much bigger than one of the ants themselves, but having long, powerful-looking legs. He came down slowly at the end of a thread, which was attached to an overhanging bough, till he was close above the line of march, when he seized an ant, and immediately went up with a flick, too suddenly and quickly for the eye to follow. After several attempts, we at last managed to secure one of these threads; I taking hold of it with my finger and thumb as high up as I could reach, while Peter snipped it with a pair of scissors close to the body of the spider, who dropped amongst the ants, and was immediately torn to pieces and devoured. The reason for his rapid spring upwards was thus explained: one ant at a time he could overpower and eat easily, a score attacking him together could perform the same office for him with equal facility. But how was this perpendicular bound managed? The thread left in my hand partially answered the question: a length of some seven feet had shrunk to three inches, and further examination showed it to be as elastic as a strip of India-rubber. But still, it was puzzling to make out how the insect managed to stretch this elastic thread while he descended, and then cause it to contract spasmodically with double the weight at the end; and it took some time and careful watching to solve the problem. This is how it was done: the spider took a metalliferous stone, heavier than itself and several ants put together, in four of its arms, and let itself swing; the weight was sufficient to stretch the elastic line to its utmost extent, and when the insect was within reach of the ants, it grasped one of them with two disengaged arms, and simultaneously let go of the stone held by the others. The weight of the spider and ant being insufficient without the stone to extend the elastic thread, they were flicked up into the tree before the other ants had time to seize the assailant, who could then overpower and devour his victim at leisure, and presently return for another.

Our curiosity being settled, I gave the order to march, and at last we started; and had not gone a couple of miles before we came to the edge of the forest, and found an expanse of open country, thinly covered with

brushwood, before us. But as a belt of trees, which we could easily reach before nightfall, was visible in our front, I determined to advance, late in the morning as it was, owing to the variety of hindrances to getting off. The herbage of this plain was coarse and scanty, not likely to attract the buffalo; but, as we wanted meat, it would not do to neglect the chances of a shot, so we advanced in extended order. It was surprising how clever my fellows were at this style of travelling; they seemed to keep the line, when hidden from each other in thick cover, by instinct. Or if by chance a man was uncertain whether he had not got too far in front, or dropped too much behind, a peculiar low guttural sound, little calculated to startle any game there might be afoot, gave token of his whereabouts, and being replied to on the left and right, gave him a correct knowledge of his position. But as a general rule the waving of a twig, the crackle of a dry branch, the rustle of a serpent gliding away, was indication sufficient.

We forced our way for two hours over ground which was, some of it, very rough, thickly overgrown in parts with a species of scrub, something like the arbutus, which often rose higher than the head; while, in other places, we had to brush through flags and rushes, with our feet sinking at every step in the marshy soil. The heat of the sun at length caused this toil to become excessive, and I was about to give the signal for the noontide halt, when suddenly I heard a shot on the right of the line, followed by the flap on the hide of an animal, which intimated that the shot had told. There had hitherto been no appearance of game, and the sound put new life into me. Two more shots, each of which was likewise on the target, and then a fine deer bounded past me. I had but a rapid snap shot, and put both bullets through his neck, without stopping him; and four more shots on the left—for the creature ran the gauntlet of the whole line—failed to bring him to bag. The trail was broad enough, however, for the poor thing was riddled with bullets, and left a rivulet of blood on its track, so that I did not believe it could run far; and we followed up for a long distance, till we were led at last into a quaking bog, where two of the Poo-pooans sank up to the armpits, and were with difficulty rescued.

Then I was compelled with reluctance to give up the pursuit and regain our proper course, from which we had wandered far; and, when better ground was reached, we sank down exhausted, disgusted, muddy, and broiled. Nine valuable bullets had been spent, and a noble stag destroyed, for the benefit of certain abominable birds and beasts of prey, my rivals; and the chances were that we should have to dine that evening off hares and quails, or monkey at best. It was an unlucky day—first the skin was lost, and then the deer; and I sank into a sulky nap without speaking a word.

A couple of hours' siesta refreshed and cheered us all amazingly, and we started in the same order as before, hoping for better fortune ere nightfall. No fresh game was started for some time, but at last Peter Tromp came up to me in an excited manner.

"Call a halt, milor; call a halt!" he cried, in a hoarse whisper.

I whistled the desired signal, and the line stopped.

"What is it?" I inquired.

"I don't know," he answered; "it is an animal I have never seen before; a curious creature, about the size of a dog."

"Why did you not shoot it?"

"I thought it looked as if small shot would not be sufficient. It would be a pity if this got away wounded too."

"That is true. Where is this curious specimen?"

"This way. Oh, I marked it down!"

This was a phrase which had taken Peter's fancy, probably because it was the sporting office which suited him best. He was an execrable shot, but yet, curiously enough, had an accurate eye for some things, and "marked" capitally; while, for finding a bird or animal that got away for some little distance before falling dead, he was quite a human retriever.

I now followed him cautiously, as, stooping and dodging, he made his way towards a tuft of thick bushes, on the edge of which he paused, and pointed. Peering in the direction which he indicated, I saw a young cub, standing with its four little stumpy legs all abroad, and its head on one side, staring at the intruders.

"I think I could catch it alive," said Peter Tromp, now seeing what his find really was. "Shall I?"

"Look out for squalls if you do," I replied. "The mother is somewhere close by, you may depend upon it."

I had hardly spoken before we heard a snarl, and one step farther brought us full upon a splendid female moolah, in the act of nursing one of her cubs, while another was playing about after the pretty fashion of the feline tribe.

It was a curious coincidence that I should have been telling the story of how I had once had an interview with a lioness and her young family in Algeria, only the night before, and that now this unintentional intrusion upon the privacy of a moolah nursery should follow as a companion picture.

"Don't shoot, Peter," I at once exclaimed, fearing lest, in the flurry of the moment, he should discharge his harmless small shot at the animal, infuriating her, and spoiling my aim.

The moolah, snarling viciously, glared upon me with her yellow orbs, and drew her limbs together for a spring. Instinctively I raised my rifle, took a steady aim exactly between the eyes, and pressed the trigger.

Click! click! No report followed the fall of the hammers; and the remembrance flashed upon me in a moment that my rifle had fallen into the wet mud when I was engaged in extricating the men who had sunk in the quaking bog where the deer was lost; and that during the noonday halt I had wiped the stock and breech carefully, removing the caps from the nipples to complete the drying and cleaning process more thoroughly.

I suppose it was the heaviness of my slumber which made me stupid and forgetful on awaking, but I certainly shouldered my weapon without ever once recalling to mind that I had removed the caps, and had neglected to replace them. It was the first time I had ever been guilty of such a piece of carelessness, and it seemed uncommonly likely to be the last.

The savage devil was within four feet of me, crouched for her spring; her tail waving slowly from side to

side. Without another preliminary movement, she could hurl herself upon me with the irresistible force of a thunderbolt. If I attempted to step back, or turn my head, I knew for certain that the movement would be my death signal. At this supreme moment I could only trust to my mesmeric influence, which had more than once been effective in quelling wild animals, and might prove so again. I met the moolah's gaze fixedly and steadily, commanding her to be rigid and powerless with the whole force of my will, and I felt that she was likewise exerting a magnetic influence, tending to paralyze me. It was a duel of fascinating power, each trying to quell the other, and I perceived presently that victory was not likely to declare itself on my side; for fatigue and want of food had dissipated that mysterious force which in our ignorance we term magnetic; and physical exhaustion was causing my thoughts to wander. The intensity of cruelty and lust of blood expressed in the brute's dilating eyes; its low, retreating forehead, and its powerful jaws engaged my attention—diverting my mind from the necessary concentration.

Directly the locks had snapped I had lowered the useless weapon, which Peter Tromp immediately took from me; and there was a chance that he might cap and use it effectually, the shot being such a near one, before the creature sprang, if I could only fix her eye a little longer. So I let it go; and without for a moment's fraction withdrawing my steadfast gaze, stole my hand towards the hilt of my knife. At any rate, I would not be beaten by Atah in the effort to sell my life dearly.

A Malay Execution.

THE following extract from a private letter gives an account of the execution of the Malay who admitted that he speared Mr. Birch:—

"To-day, 20th May, I putum (the man who admitted he speared poor Birch) was tried by Sultan Abdoolah, under the superintendence of the Resident at Banda Barhu, and by his own people condemned to death.

"He has been some months in confinement, as the authorities could not make up their minds which way they would like the poor fellow sent to his last resting-place, either by hanging or, according to the Malay custom, krissing him.

"The latter is performed by the doomed man sitting on the ground, after the manner of the Easterns. The executioner stands over the culprit on the left side, and points the kriss (Malay knife, carried by every man), just above the collar bone, in the direction of the heart. Holding it with his left hand in an upright position, with his right he strikes the handle, and the kriss immediately pierces the heart.

"Three or four Malays sit round, and hold the limbs of the man to be krissed, to prevent his jumping into the air when the heart is touched.

"To-day, May 20, I putum was hanged. As it was impossible to know what amount of excitement the execution might cause, the gallows was erected at the end of the parade ground, against the river, and with the sailors, Royal Artillery, 80th Regiment, and Seikhs, who formed three sides of a square.

"The Sultan Abdoolah was invited to attend, which, very much to our astonishment, he did.

"The murderer walked up quietly from the police-station, and the rope was put round his neck, and Ladqil, the interpreter, proclaimed aloud in Malay why he was executed.

"A minute or so before, the Sultan Abdoolah came, and received his salute.

"I putum then asked to be allowed to say a few words; and in a firm voice, without a tremor, and free from all emotion, he said he was only a tool in the hands of the big Rajas of the place, and murdered Birch in accordance with his orders.

"The Sultan looked a sickly green, not knowing what might come next.

"It was impossible for a man to have met death better—perfect composure and entire absence of swagger and bravado. A Malay can, when he likes, act the part of a perfect gentleman.

"I think his neck was broken, since he did not appear to suffer in the least. We kept the troops there for five minutes or so, and then marched them away—leaving a dozen men to keep the ground the troops had occupied, until the body had hung nearly an hour, and the doctor pronounced him dead.

"His friends were allowed to take the body away."

Double Acrostic.

HE wears no gown, nor in his shoes puts peas,
And at his quiet club he takes his ease;
Although no colour, every colour he;
Although no cook, he yet a cook may be;
And, like his brethren of the ancient time,
Quaffs his full glass, and eats his joints so prime.

1. Standing with golden head; when harvest's o'er,
It feeds the winter from the autumn's store.
2. Day by day
It steals away,
Nor will for any mortal stay;
Too slow for grief,
For bliss too brief—
It was, it is, it will in future be,
Till time's absorbed in vast eternity.
3. Nor I, nor thou, I mean nor he;
I mean not even you nor we;
For I, in Latin, may mean many more
Than all the pronouns I have named before.
4. So proudly once upon the priestly head
It shone, and filled a trembling world with dread;
Shone o'er a darkened world with sickening light,
Now fades before a newborn nation's might.
5. If, in another, me you ever find,
Forgive, forget, and blot it out of mind;
For in this world of sore temptation, you
May want from Heaven the same kind pity too.

1. WheatsheaF.
2. HouR.
3. IIII.
4. TiarA.
5. ErroR.

WHITE FRIAR.

The Egotist's Note-book.

ARCHDEACON DENISON seems to be an oddity, if Mr. Cowan is correct in his speech in the House of Commons. The archdeacon, it appears, dislikes school inspectors, and upon one visiting the school, the following conversation took place, as related by the archdeacon in a speech at Manchester. He said to his wife—

"Let us go and see what that man's doing; he's been there two hours now, and has had time to spoil the whole of the children in school."

They got into the school just as he was finishing, and were informed by the inspector that he had nearly done; to which the archdeacon replied that he was glad to hear it.

"Did the children ever sing?" the inspector asked.

"Oh, yes," Archdeacon Denison replied; and, turning to his wife, asked her to start them.

His wife had been teaching the children to sing "Goosey, goosey, gander;" so, after getting their voices into tune, the children struck up—

"Goosey, goosey, gander,
Whither do you wander?
Upstairs and downstairs,
And in the ladies' chamber.
Old Father Longlegs
Didn't say his prayers,
So they took him by the left leg,
And threw him downstairs."

The inspector immediately left, and the archdeacon had never seen an inspector, either diocesan or any other, ever since, and he hoped he never would.

It is almost natural to suppose that the inspector did not like it. Certainly, it was a little opposed to the treatment he might have expected.

Dr. Alfred Swaine Taylor says: "In the course of the last thirty years, at least fifteen cases of the exhumation of dead bodies have been referred to me. On some of these inquests have been held, but no inspections were made. Verdicts of death from cholera and natural causes had been returned; and, at intervals of from one month to twenty-two months, the bodies have been disinterred, and it has been then proved that the deceased had died from poison. In some of these cases the deaths were sudden, and in others slow; in the latter, the symptoms during life were mistaken for those of disease, medical certificates of the causes of death having been given without sufficient inquiry; and thus it is that crime passes undetected, and several lives may be destroyed in succession before a criminal is arrested." Such a sentence as this must send a shiver through the secret poisoner, who will learn that there is no safety even after the grave has closed over the poisoned victim.

A somewhat curious fact in natural history is reported from the neighbourhood of Banbury. Of late years English bee-keepers have taken to keeping the so-called Ligurian, or Italian bees, which are larger, stronger, and, it is said, capable of harder work than their English congeners. Unfortunately, however, these Ligurian bees are also it would seem excessively bad-tempered, and when deprived of their honey and kept

upon short commons, are apt to prove very dangerous neighbours. At Abingdon, according to a correspondent of the *Times*, who signs himself "M.," a couple of hives of them have actually attacked and killed a donkey. The matter explains itself. Italy seems to give birth to that which is hasty and passionate; and its bees, instead of keeping their stings sheathed, follow the example of the Italian, and at the slightest provocation out with their knives and stab.

What delicious ostriches amatory people are! How they run their heads into the sand, and think that nobody sees. Even in their advertisements, they seem to imagine that the agony column is read only by themselves. Here is the last:—

...—"Received your telegram, darling. Contents have made me very miserable and unhappy. You could make me so happy if you liked, and yourself at any rate far happier than you are now. Look for message every day in the *Daily Print*. Write to me daily. Never mind stamps, if you have none send without.—With fondest love, yours, "DUCKY."

"Ducky!" How sweet and sympathetic, downy, soft, and delicious. Well, I suppose they cannot help it!

A grocer is advertising "sugar that is really sweet." What, then, has the sugar really been that we have been eating of late? It sounds suspicious; or is it only that our friends sell their sugar minus the sand?

How theatrical managers take time by the forelock. Here, it is only August, and yet the title and authorship of one Christmas piece is announced—out of place, as it seems, with the thermometer up to shirt-collarsoakage on the slightest movement, and the dry heat from which we have been suffering, visible wherever there is a tree, whose leaves are crisped and literally scorched up. As for ordinary fruit and flowers, they have been dried upon their stalks.

Nothing is more satisfactory than to see a magistrate deal out judgment with vigour as well as discrimination. Of late, when scoundrels have sent impure meat up to the London markets—meat that would probably cause internal complaints amongst the poor people who partook thereof—the senders got off with a fine. The other day, however, a man was convicted of having a large quantity of putrid provisions on his premises prepared for food, and he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, without the option of a fine. For, after all, what is a fine? No punishment at all to a man through whose hands large amounts are passing in the way of trade. Three months' imprisonment; and little enough for a man who, for the sake of profit, risks the poisoning wholesale of his fellow-creatures. Now, if the magistrate had kindly, in addition, ordered that the prisoner should be fed while in prison on his own beef, what a lesson it would have been!

All who have been in the House of Commons must recall what a church-like aspect the interior of the building presents. At times this is very striking, and, in addition to the prayer with which the sitting begins—prayer, by the way, to which the ungodly reporters are

not admitted—one is often favoured with preaching. At the Eastern debate, the other day, the similarity to a church or chapel was made more than ever striking by Mr. Bruce, who, after a pause in his speech to look out some reference, suddenly exclaimed, "Number 517 in the blue book;" but though there was a rustling of paper, no organ struck up, and no one rose to sing.

Apropos of nothing, what tiresome people those are who are not content when a man is in trouble with uttering a word of condolence, and passing on their way. They are genuine and well-meaning, but how they bore when every nerve is stretched, and the flesh is tender and quivering. Not satisfied with being told of the ill, they must know all; in short, on learning that the wound is there, insist upon seeing the sore place.

Bill-stickers might be a little more careful, and not place placards of the same size and similar lettering one beneath the other, to the confusion of her Majesty's lieges, and the annoyance of a publishing firm. For instance, during the past month, reading right on, and to all intents and purposes apparently belonging, there has appeared on a hoarding in Chancery-lane, the following notice:—

XX

MACHINE COTTON.

The Holiday Number of "BELGRAVIA."

It makes the ignorant exclaim, What a bad choice of title! "The Romance of a Sewing Machine" would have been far better.

What an absurdity is that plan of sending a man before a road locomotive with a red flag. Of course it is to give warning to drivers, and therefore he should be some fifty yards ahead. As it is, on suburban roads, he saunters along some five or ten feet before the engine, and his fluttering red flag does a great deal more mischief in the way of frightening skittish horses than would any engine. As a rule, though, London horses are too much sobered by work to pay heed to any engines other than whips.

Ladies will welcome as a boon the gloves supplied by Mr. Jannings, of Fenchurch-street—gloves which possess all the advantages of cut, excellence of leather, and beauty of dye. After a fair trial, it is only just to speak of them as the cheapest and best—whether one, two, or three-buttoned—we have tried. A good kid glove is one of the modern requisites of civilization; and a lady *bien gantée* is pretty sure in other respects to be well dressed, even as a man never looks shabby in a decent hat.

A would-be comic man has been declaring that the Turkish towns and provinces, &c., are all named after ex-ladies of the Sultan's harem. For instance, he says there is Sal Onika, Jane Ina, Sis Tova, Mary Tza, Ann Dis, Dardy Nell, Sophia, Bess Arabia, Moll Davia, Carry Su, Bel Grade, and Con Stantinople.

I see that the Alexandra Palace people are about to give a new ballet, called "Cupid on the Coral Island"—of course, a most suitable place for the fat little baby

boy who has not cut his teeth. Nothing like coral for rubbing the gums. In the primitive days, when Cupid was in the flesh, he probably had to make shift with flower bells.

The English public have for a long time past had quite a craze for china and *bric-à-brac* of all kinds: cups and saucers, teapots, jugs, vases, and basins adorn (?) every table and stand in the homes of the well-to-do, while the walls are made gay with platters, for which a new style of wire-suspender has been invented.

The prices that have of late been given for some of these fictile pieces of ware are something astounding. Ordinary-looking little Chelsea ornaments have fetched over a hundred pounds, that were probably originally very profitable at one pound to the maker. Other wares have been as high in the market. Only let the piece of pottery be old, ugly, and belonging to an extinct kiln, like that of Lowestoft or Chelsea, and any price would be fetched in a keen competition.

The Americans, however, are rather different in their taste, if not more particular about their pockets; for at a late gimcrack sale at New York, statuary would not sell at all, and fictile objects "ruled low," as the city articles say. The specimens were to a great extent old Indian pottery, going back even to the time of the Incas, and the bids for them were in cents—halfpence! A Greek amphora from Cyprus was sold for five dollars; and china from Sèvres, Dresden, and similar great factories, fetched what connoisseurs would have called degradingly low prices. A few dollars seem to have been the outside price given for some of the most important objects of the sale, with the exception of a Marie Antoinette table, inlaid and bearing plaques of Sèvres porcelain from the Royal manufactory, which ran up to the astounding sum of two hundred and eleven dollars. It would have made as many pounds, at the least, at Christie and Manson's sale-rooms, St. James's, where the writer saw a very ugly shepherd talking to an uglier shepherdess, beneath the shade of a fan-shaped tree, covered with cabbages, composed of Chelsea china, knocked down for one hundred and twenty guineas, and did not envy the purchaser, for the ornament was of the type that is seen in country cottages, standing on the top of a chest of drawers, with a florid tea-tray behind, and a couple of glass rolling-pins at either end, ornamented with chintz-cut-out flowers set in salt.

How do pictures sell out there? Here our artists are thriving wonderfully, setting up their carriages, building houses, and giving *fêtes*, so great is the demand for their work. Once get a pretty good name, and a thousand guineas is considered about the regular price for picture or portrait. It shows well for the prosperity of the country; and those who talk about extravagance might remember that high prices mean great circulation of money, and the prosperity of the many in place of the few. Perhaps prices may rule higher in New York next time, otherwise it will be hard for the men.

The *Birmingham Post*, in a late edition, says:—"We have been shown a remarkable specimen of the coiner's art, in the shape of a sovereign of base metal, corresponding so exactly in weight, colour, ring, and cutting with the genuine coin as to deceive even many practised bankers. It bears the Queen's head, seemingly a little flattened by wear, with the date 1855,

and on the obverse the shield and crown. The milling, though somewhat marred in the specimen before us by experimental filing and clipping, appears to be admirably executed; but, on a close inspection of some of the lettering, some slight flaws are observable in the formation, more especially of the letter 'N.' The colour is just a shade paler than that of the English sovereign, resembling more that of the Australian gold coins; and the metal, being what is termed platinum gold, is of the same colour throughout. The only obvious distinctions between this counterfeit and the genuine sovereigns are that the former is very slightly larger, and that the ring or tone is a little sharper than that of pure gold. We understand that the cost of the base sovereigns cannot be less than eleven shillings each."

Honesty the Best Policy.

PERSONS engaged in the sardine trade in France are finding out that fraud is not always profitable in the long run. This export trade, says Consul Clipperton in his commercial report on Nantes for the past year, was found to have fallen off to such a great extent that information on the subject was sought by the Minister of Commerce from the French consuls abroad. The United States, being the principal buyer of this article, were applied to in the first instance; and the unpleasant truth was revealed in a despatch from the French Consul-General at New York last February. It seems that the hermetically closed boxes containing, it was fondly believed, "sardines à l'huile," could no longer be depended on for the nature of their contents. Spurious fish, such as sprats, mackerel, and even more common species, were introduced, while the oil was of very inferior quality. It was discovered that at least 40 per cent. of the importation was spurious, and as a natural consequence the general demand for sardines fell, and a large stock was left on hand. The ordinary yearly production of sardines is between 400,000 and 500,000 cases, each case containing 100 boxes, of which it is estimated that France consumes 70,000 cases, or on an average one box for every five inhabitants. With a view to protect the buyers in future from being cheated by fraudulent contractors, a syndicate has been lately formed to watch, as far as possible, that the rules and regulations agreed to by the trade are complied with, and having full powers to grant a mark or certificate guaranteeing that the merchandise is of a sound and marketable quality—the quality to be determined each season and to be considered as accepted.

THE season has arrived when every one is thinking of turning from the sultriness of town life to the pleasures of a country tour. Ladies who take very little exercise when at home, with true British courage often undertake long and tedious journeys. It is of the highest importance, under such circumstances, that the clothing should in no way impede the proper circulation of the blood, but especially should the old but bad practice of gartering the leg be avoided. Mr. Almond, of 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, has provided the only means of remedying this in his New Patent Stocking Suspender, which he will send by post for 2d. extra. The prices are—Children's, 1s. 6d.; maids', 2s.; ladies', 3s. Our advice is to write at once for a pair.

Those Boots.

"WELL, Mr. Siskin, shall we say ten o'clock—ten punctually? You can pay the deposit, and the house will virtually be yours."

"No," he answered, with a fierceness that as nearly knocked me off my pins as if a skittle ball had struck me. "No, not punctually. Punctuality and pedigrees I have had enough of. Insist on its being ten punctually, and I am off my bargain."

In those early auctioneering days, I did not easily let a customer go. I should as soon have thought of knocking Mr. Siskin down as of opposing him; so, smiling in spite of myself, I said—

"About ten, then, shall we say?"

"Ay, now you speak. About ten it shall be. But mark me, sir—"

I could have marked him more literally than would have suited Mr. Siskin; for I was most terribly hungry, and the man was so like the Ancient Mariner when he held the wedding guest—his eye glittering like a diamond with a fierce excitement, kindled by my innocent remark about punctuality.

He was a man with a grievance—no doubt of that; his only relief was detailing his sorrow, evidently; and I, poor hungry wretch, with a dear wife—my Julia, punctual little puss—who would have dinner ready to a tick (the spirit of punctuality, driven out of Siskin, may have sought and found congenial refuge in Julia), must devour his long, dry story instead of a savoury and more substantial meal.

"You have heard," he began—and as he spoke, his long, claw-like finger insinuated itself in my button-hole—"you have heard," he said, "'it is ill waiting for dead men's shoes?' Mark me again when I say, that is true. Other men might say it, but I know it."

"Susan—that's my wife: happy to introduce you, but deaf as a post—Susan and I waited for old Lionel's cash for years—there is no denying that—and reckoned his income to a penny."

"The hope of having that money was our star, our anchor. Tough old party, too—fearfully tough. He should have been a missionary; might have defied the cannibals; never have got their teeth in him!"

"But the punctuality of the man! Talk of the Charles—the what is it?—of Germany, and the watches, Lionel would have beaten him into fits. His house was all clocks, except where it broke out into watches."

"Fearful house to visit—awful place to stay at. Up by the clock; breakfast by the clock; dinner by the clock. Time divided between looking out for punctual servants, and dismissing unpunctual ones. What a signalman old Lionel would have made, or a postman! but as a private gentleman he was a bore. Did I tell you what relation Lionel Sands was to me? Not likely. I have been half-maddened too often, trying to trace the Siskin-cum-Sands genealogical tree, to be in much danger of attempting it again."

"If, to shun the Scylla of punctuality, you fell into the Charybdis of pedigree, your dearest foe might pity you."

"If we had not been as poor as Job, we would have soon cut Mr. Sands; but he was rich and old, we poor and young, so we thought it wise to keep in with our 'dear relation,' especially as he had only a nephew, and he abroad somewhere."

"What had happened we could not even guess, but for some reason our last letter had remained unanswered for months, and we dared not write out of turn; when a telegram came, asking me to meet the old man in Brighton the day after next, at half-past three precisely, on particular business."

"But you are in a hurry, I see," said the old hypocrite, holding me as tightly as ever.

I was ravenous, but dared do nothing but resign myself.

"I will cut a long story short," he said.

But he was not so truthful as some men are. A friend of mine would have described him as an "able-bodied liar"—but he is fond of odd expressions.

"Susan let the telegram drop from her hands, as she said—"

"What can it be about?"

"She was not deaf then."

"His will, my dear," I chuckled; 'he wants to make his will in our favour, and would like my advice. He has quarrelled with every other relation, except the Wandering Jew of a nephew and us, on the score either of punctuality or pedigree.'

"Silas," said my wife, 'it will never do to go in such boots as those of yours. It would be madness to go on such an errand down at heels, with one stocking inked at the toe, and an underlay; it would be simply ridiculous.'

"I will not detain you while I describe the drunken shoemaker that agreed—when he got sober enough to understand that I wished to be a customer—to send me a pair of boots worthy of the occasion."

"They shall be of the right sort," he declared, over and over again. Of the right sort, at twelve, they should be at my house punctually."

"Now, if he had been a man of his word, I might have been able to endure the word punctual to-day; but he was not. The train would leave at 1.15. Twelve came, but no boots; half-past, yet still they came not. It would take a quarter of an hour to reach the station; and as I said to Susan twenty times that day, if once—"

"I wouldn't have missed that train for the world."

"Boots or no boots, off I go," said I at last. 'If the train stops long enough at Lewes, I will buy a pair there'—I was living at Hastings. 'If not, tell Lionel about the shoemaker disappointing me. It will be a line for him, and put him in a good humour to begin with.'

"Another minute I should have started with my old boots polished like glass; but I was stopped by the arrival of a dirty child with the new pair."

"I put one on in a twinkling—it fitted admirably; then, giving the child my old ones to take home to be repaired, I stooped to put the other on, saying gaily—"

"Now, then, on you go, and off go I."

"Oh, confusion! By all that is perverse—how stupid! Why, how's this? Why, it's not the fellow one, but a mile too small."

"I dragged at it till the loops cracked again, and the perspiration ran off my face like rain."

"Run after that young imp of a girl!" I shouted. 'Get my old boots back. Stupid! why do you stand there? I wouldn't miss this train for the world?'

"Why did you send the old ones till you had tried the new?" retorted Susan, sharply. 'I think you are the stupid.'

"She was right. But when I went hopping off after the child, she was softened in a moment, and darted to the door. Whether the quick starting tears blinded her or how it happened, I know not; but the 'young hussy,' as she called her in her vexation, could not be found.

"You are tired, I see," said Mr. Siskin, as I yawned wearily, and tried to smile; "but the joke's in the sequel, and I have nearly done.

"I raved and fumed as I stood with one boot on, and the fragments of the other in my hand. The right was right enough, but what was left of the left was no larger than a child's boot: nothing short of hydraulic pressure could have got my foot into it.

"Nothing in the shape of boots had I in the house, but some old carpet slippers. It was raining, too; but in desperation I put one of the slippers on, and started. Will the shade of Hood pardon me if I say, altering his lines a shade—

"'With breathless haste, like a soul in chase,
I slipped it on and ran'?"

and caught the train, to my great surprise and joy.

"There was a handsome, sunburnt fellow in the carriage, a perfect gentleman—capital, good-natured fellow, too, he was—entered into conversation at once, and seemed so wonderfully interested in my story of the boots—strangely so almost. He asked as many questions about my relative as if he had been an old friend.

"'Lewes is no go,' he said; 'train stops two minutes only, so that's a stumper.'

"Then he talked a little; and yet, as I looked at him, I noticed he was abstracted."

"'Mind seemed other where,'"

I murmured.

"Exactly. Apt—very apt."

And he grinned horribly.

"My newly found friend," he continued, "offered most kindly to help me out of my difficulty—he did not know Brighton very well, but having listened to the description of the position of Lionel's house, he decided I should have a quarter of an hour at least to spare.

"I will take the pattern boot, and match it in no time at the first boot-shop; you can wait at the station. I will not keep you long."

"He was as good as his word when we reached Brighton. I sat in the waiting-room, while, with the pattern boot in hand, he hurried off on his generous mission. It was a ridiculous predicament to be left there with one slipper on, and dependent on the word of a stranger. I shall never forget that time—the longest quarter of an hour I ever remember. At last the conviction flashed on me that the time was gone. I ran out of the room on to the platform to see the clock. Oh, horror! the time was past by several minutes.

"An astonished porter stopped, and asked me what was up?

"'The time is!' I answered sharply.

"Then more politely told enough of my story to enlist his sympathy, which took an eminently practical form.

"'Take a cab at once,' he said.

"And giving me a lift on his back, I was in another minute rattling down Queen's-road like mad.

"'Dolt, not to have thought of this before. What will Susan say? She will never forgive me for being such an unmitigated noodle.'

"When my Jehu had thundered with the knocker sufficiently—according to his notions of propriety, which were peculiar—the door of my dear relation's house was thrown open by my late travelling companion, who, bowing in the blandest manner, said—

"'Oh! here are your boots, Mr. Siskin. Will you put them on in the cab?'

"'You crafty scoundrel!' I roared, as soon as I could gather sufficient breath. 'I will kick you to Jericho with them, if I can only get them on.'

"'Here, cabby, fetch a policeman or two,' said the nephew—for of course it was he. 'Or, stay, your machine will just do to run him in: he's as mad as a hatter.'

"Cabby grinned; so did every one of the small crowd that had gathered round.

"I put the boots on, and paid the fare; then, quietly stepping to the door, as old Lionel Sands came along the passage, I was about to explain the trick that had been played me.

"To my intense disgust, the old donkey pointed to a gigantic clock-face in the hall, and addressed me as follows—

"'Mr. Siskin, you know my rule—punctuality. Strict punctuality, and no excuses. The business is settled. My nephew will not regret it, if you do. Another time, if you cannot get your boots to come in, come without. Good day.'

"He slammed the door in my face.

"I shall never forget the utter exasperation that seized me. I kicked at the door like an impotent madman. I am afraid I swore, or very nearly; then turned away to hide my tears—for keep them back I could not for my life. Well, I cannot stay to tell you all; besides, I am detaining you, perhaps?

"When old Sands died, he left everything to that gentlemanly thief of a nephew, by a will dated the day he so fiercely sent me packing. He soon sold off the clocks and furniture, and long before this has been half over the world.

"One thing I must say—we received £200 by post six months after the death of old Lionel; and, as we could never trace the sender, put it down as 'conscience money' from the nephew.

"Well, good day," said Mr. Siskin; "and at about ten look for me."

So I did, but he never came; and to this hour, if I disappoint dear Julia, she is apt to ask me if I have been stopping to talk to Mr. Siskin about his boots?

BASE INGRATITUDE.—When Brennan, the noted highwayman, was taken in the south of Ireland, curiosity drew numbers to the gaol, to see, loaded with irons, the man who had long been a terror to the country. Among others was a banker, whose notes at that time were not held in the highest estimation, who assured the prisoner that he was very glad to see him there at last. Brennan, looking up, replied, "Ah, sir, I did not expect that from you—indeed I did not; for you well know that when all the country refused your notes, I took them."

Roses on the Brink.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER.

CHAPTER XXX.—ONE DISCOVERY LEADS TO ANOTHER.

SOCIETY, jumping to the conclusion that Edgar Knowles, late M.P. for Piddingham, must be a ruined man, waited impatiently to have that conclusion confirmed. But the facts were not readily forthcoming. Rumours of a startling nature cropped up everywhere; but such particulars as got into circulation were the invention of those who circulated them.

All at once, to the relief of everybody, the news of Aunt Effra's elopement got wind. That settled everything. People had always known, they now asserted, that the sister had all the money; that she secretly kept up her brother's household; that she had paid his election bills; and what could be more clear than that, finding him in difficulties, she had taken herself off?

This was so obvious, that the story of the elopement was only half believed, though of course it was talked of everywhere, because such a bit of scandal was too good to be lost.

As for Edgar Knowles, in spite of his resentment against Effra for quitting him in the hour of his trial, he was true to the instinct which had at the first moment prompted him to assert that his sister "must not be sacrificed for want of an effort to save her."

His difficulty was how to set about doing anything in her behalf.

Her letter gave him the impression that she had been lured away by some foreign adventurer. She spoke of herself as "the Exile's Bride," and further intimated that the Exile in question was a man of rank in his own country. This was all that could be gathered, and what was the value of such a clue? Both Eva and himself thought over every individual in their circle to whom the description would apply, and thought in vain. They knew no one who was likely to have been on terms of intimacy with the misguided woman, and all attempts at serving her seemed thus far baffled.

In this dilemma, Knowles took a practical step.

He sent for his solicitor.

Unknown to all, he had—for a secret purpose of his own—been in communication with his man of business, Peckford by name, for some days. He now summoned him to the Park, and gave him an explicit statement of the case. Peckford was a sharp, shrewd, wiry man, with a head like a bird, and little inquisitive eyes, that carried out the general resemblance; and having listened in dead silence, he gave an immediate proof of his sagacity.

"Send for the girl," he said.

"Who—Felice?"

"Yes."

"You think she's at the bottom of it?"

"Think! No, I don't think. I know."

So Felice was summoned into the lawyer's presence, and at once subjected to rigid examination. At first she affected innocence, was indignant at any suspicion of complicity, was quite sure that she knew nothing of what was going on until the moment of finding the letter and making the discovery of the missing property, which she had at once communicated to her

master. But Peckford was accustomed to people who protested innocence, and it did not at all shake his theory. So he persisted in his questions, brought out little facts, and by that means little discrepancies, confused Felice, bewildered Felice, and at length got her into such a state of entanglement and confusion that she could only find refuge in tears.

Beauty in tears would have melted some men; but Peckford cared no more for the tears than he did for the beauty. He hailed them as a sign of weakness, and went on giving the screw turn after turn, till the artful little accomplice had not a rag of a falsehood big enough to hide her face behind; and, driven to desperation, made a confession of her guilt—preferring to do this on her knees in the approved theatrical style.

Then she explained all she knew.

Every fact within her knowledge touching Aunt Effra's clandestine carrying on with Marco was laid bare, and it was rendered abundantly clear that the Italian was the companion of the foolish woman's flight. On one point only Felice could give no information. In answer to the question, "Who is this Marco?" she could only shake her head with obvious helplessness. She had only met him on her mistress's business; and though they had grown familiar, even to the extent of uniting to play a trick on the old lady, she had learned nothing about him.

Yes—there was one point on which she could speak. She knew that he lived, or had friends living, in an old house by the river-side. The situation of this house she described with minuteness, and was then suffered to retire, having been duly warned by the lawyer that she had been guilty of a serious offence against the law—the precise nature of which he prudently refrained from entering into—and that she had nothing to rely on but her employer's clemency.

So far the lawyer had done well.

Clearly the next step was for Knowles to search out the house by the river, and see what could be obtained as to its occupier.

This he proceeded to do at once; and putting himself in the hands of an experienced cabman, rather than relying on his own coachman, succeeded in due time in reaching Wapping, and discovering the dilapidated structure of which he was in search.

Quitting the cab at the corner, he hastened toward the porch of the house, and was about to enter it, when he was suddenly confronted by a familiar face.

It was that of Randolph Agnew.

The surprise of the one was only equalled by the discomfiture of the other.

"Mr. Agnew," cried Knowles, "this is indeed an unexpected meeting!"

"Ye-es. Quite so. The fact is—"

But whatever the fact was, Randolph was too confused and bewildered to give expression to it, and suddenly jumped from an explanation to a question.

"But who would have thought of seeing you here?" he demanded.

A few words served to state what had happened—Aunt Effra's flight, and the evidence which pointed to Marco's complicity. Randolph was so startled by the revelation that he had scarcely words in which to express his amazement. Of course he could say nothing to Knowles of that which was uppermost in his own mind—namely, the thought that this was the clue to

the secret of the change in Marco's manner, and the insolence of his tone at their last interview. He contented himself with a few ordinary expressions of wonder, and as he did so an idea occurred to him by which he might explain his own presence in that strange place, and appear to render assistance to the man destined, he supposed, to be his friend Harcourt's father-in-law.

"You are probably not aware," he said, "that this Italian is in some way mixed up with art?"

"No; that is new to me," the other replied.

"I thought it likely," said Randolph. "He deals, I believe, in pictures, lace, china, buhl, marqueterie, lacquer, and so forth, and I was about to explain just now that I had come here in the hope of seeing some of his treasures. But the house is deserted."

"You have knocked?"

"Till I am tired. It is certain that there can be no one here."

"Or that the object is concealment," returned the other, reluctant to abandon all hope of any discovery he had hoped to make. "I might have expected this. The question is, what is to be done now in the way of getting on the trail of this scoundrel?"

"I was coming to that point," said Agnew. "This Marco, as he is familiarly called, has, I happen to know, a daughter—"

Edgar Knowles groaned.

"A daughter!" he exclaimed. "The fellow is a married man, then?"

"Probably a widow. But as I was saying, he has a daughter who is at present staying with people of whom I have some slight knowledge." He did not deem it prudent to state the real fact that he knew Zerina, nor the people who had charge of her. "It is possible that a call on them might elicit something. The daughter must know her father's movements."

"True; and this call?"

"I will make to-day. I had perhaps better drop in alone, without formality, and without stating my object. I will drive round to the park, and report progress in the evening."

Edgar Knowles thanked him. Under ordinary circumstances, it would have been peculiarly distasteful to him to have received favours from the bosom friend of Edmund Harcourt, whom he so thoroughly mistrusted, and who, he believed, was seeking to do him the bitterest wrong through his own child. But the desire to save Effra, if possible, from the consequences of her folly was very strong in his brotherly heart, and this meeting with Randolph had been so sudden and unexpected that he had drifted into the consequences of it almost without a thought. He was only reminded of the distastefulness which the arrangement inspired by the alacrity with which he got out of Agnew's society at the earliest opportunity that offered for their taking separate roads.

On his part, Randolph Agnew was not sorry when they parted.

The meeting had given him such a shock—for he knew not to what discoveries the fact of his being seen at that place might lead—that he found it hard to recover it. And, adroitly as he felt he had got out of the difficulty, it left him in a state of tremor.

As already hinted, he was not vicious, but weak; and his weakness had the effect of vice. It led him

to squander his Foreign Office pay on follies which gave him little pleasure, while his life was made miserable by the expedients he had to adopt to make up deficiencies. Long since, he had grown weary of Harcourt, with his selfish heartlessness and utter want of principle and moral tone. The link which bound them together was unfortunately too strong for him to sever; but even while he lent himself to villainies, it was with an ever-present sense of compunction, and his heart was always ready to pity those he helped to ruin.

For the Knowles family he entertained feelings of deep commiseration—that is, deep for his shallow nature. He respected them; he admired Eva. If a word of his could have saved them from the fate to which Harcourt had destined them, he would gladly have spoken it; and it was with real satisfaction—from one point of view—that he had heard of those money losses of which every one was speaking, seeing that they had already begun to cool the ardour with which Harcourt was following up his suit to Eva.

This being the state of his feelings, he was glad to do Edgar Knowles a service, however much he might regret the circumstance which had put it in his power to do so.

Going westward, he bethought him that it was about the hour when the Dormer-Pagets took their drive in Rotten-row. He had often seen their showy barouche; often heard the loungers of the rails inquire "who the dooce that fine woman was?" If he strolled down to the Row, it might give him the opportunity he sought of speaking with Zerina.

As it was the fashionable part of the afternoon, the Row was crowded, carriages rolling along in unbroken streams. Randolph planted himself against the rails, and quietly awaited the Dormer-Paget equipage.

It was long in coming.

He began to doubt whether the people would put in any appearance at all that day, but at length his patience was rewarded. The yellow vehicle came slowly along, and the usual comments of the loungers on Mrs. Dormer-Paget and her gorgeous raiment began.

As good luck would have it, the carriage came to a dead-lock nearly opposite the place where Agnew was standing. He had, therefore, an opportunity of seeing and speaking to its occupants.

To his disappointment, Zerina was not among them.

The back seat was occupied entirely by Mrs. Dormer-Paget, whose billowing skirts, radiant with colour, formed a sea about her. Opposite, sat the husband of the parrot-beak, as usual, a marvel of neat primness, but conversing with a lady-friend of the distinctly horsey type, who displayed more of her fair bosom than was quite necessary in the open air of a spring afternoon.

These were all the people in the carriage.

Agnew hesitated what to do. He did not know any of them, except by sight; and it clearly was not the proper thing to address strangers. Chance decided the question. The dead-lock was protracted, and, as he looked at Mrs. Dormer-Paget, she—possibly mistaking him for some one else—nodded and smiled.

"Beg pardon," he said, instantly raising his hat; "but I was looking for your young friend, who is not—"

"For Zerina? You know her?" the lady eagerly interrupted.

"I have that pleasure," he replied. "My name is Randolph—"

"Agnew?"

"Yes."

"Ah, then, you can tell us something of the dear child. But why should you express your surprise at her absence? It was your note which led her to leave the house."

"My note?"

"Certainly. That which you wrote last night."

"To Zerina?"

"Yes."

"Pardon me—I have never written to her in my life."

"But your note was brought to me after the dear child had left. She had dropped it by accident, no doubt; and—by the way, I may have it with me."

She drew from her pocket the huge betting-book she invariably carried, and unclasped it with her daintily gloved right hand, above which the colonel's diamond bracelet glistened in the sunshine.

"Ah, here it is," she exclaimed; and taking out the little note we have already read, handed it out of the carriage.

Agnew took it with a surprised and puzzled look.

"This is not my writing," he at once said, decisively. "I know nothing of it."

"Is it possible?" asked the lady, with genuine surprise. "And you see the nature of it? I begin to be alarmed. Dormer," she added, addressing her husband, who prudently never appeared to listen to what his wife said unless his attention was drawn to it, "do you hear this? That note on which Zerina so imprudently left the house last night was not sent by Mr. Agnew."

"Indeed!"

His eyebrows remained arched and his forehead wrinkled during the full time that it occupied him to take a long pinch of his favourite snuff.

"I assure you that it is so," Randolph interposed. "There is some mystery in this, as well as danger to Zerina. My name would not have been used without a motive. What that motive was you possibly are best able to guess."

"Indeed, no," said Mrs. Dormer-Paget.

But she had turned white, and was clearly agitated.

Agnew also noticed that she glanced at the diamond bracelet with a frightened look, and instinctively drew the corner of her India shawl over it.

"What do you advise?" he asked.

There was hesitation on the part of both husband and wife. They seemed powerless to offer any suggestion or propose any course of action.

So he himself suggested—

"Would it not be well that Zerina's father should at once be communicated with?"

Mrs. Dormer-Paget gave a hesitating assent. She was wondering how Marco would receive the news of what had happened.

"You are probably aware of his hiding-place?" the young man asked. "You know, of course, that he has disappeared?"

"No!"

There was genuine surprise in the answer, and in the look that accompanied it.

"And Zerina—was she ignorant of what has happened?" he asked.

"Entirely so."

"Then the object of my seeking her here would have been defeated. Marco's absence complicates the matter, even if it does not add to the mystery. Well, it is useless for me to detain you. As you are in possession of all I know, you will consider what is best to be done. Perhaps you will suffer me to call, so that I may render assistance, should it be in my power to do so?"

Assent was readily accorded, the address given, and the carriage moved on with the stream.

Randolph Agnew turned away from the rails manifestly disquieted. The impression the Dormer-Pagets had produced on him was an unfavourable one, and there was bitterness in his heart against Marco for having entrusted his daughter with them.

"I could half believe," he said within himself, "that that woman was capable of conniving at the girl's ruin. I mistrusted her that night at the opera, and then—good heavens, what can I have been thinking of?—there was the colonel!"

At the thought of the colonel he looked aghast.

CHAPTER XXXI.—THE BIRD IN THE CAGE.

WHAT, meanwhile, of the object of his solicitude? What of Zerina, in the gilded cage into which she had been so adroitly entrapped?

On finding the door locked upon her, she did what a girl so situated was pretty certain to do—she sat down and shed plentiful tears. They were tears of mingled indignation and alarm. High-spirited as she was, she resented the trick she supposed Randolph Agnew to have played, and vague apprehensions as to his motives filled her mind. Her love for him made it all the harder for her to forgive him, while uncertainty as to whether he reciprocated her passion lay at the root of her terrors.

The whole proceeding was so strange that she felt bewildered, and unable to realise what was happening. Again and again her eyes wandered about the room. It was a perfect gem, exquisitely fitted, and strewn with works of art and objects of interest of all kinds. But the woman's instinct detected that no woman's hand had had part in its arrangement. There was an absence of those traits of feminine delicacy which give the sense of "home" to what is otherwise a mere triumph of upholstery.

Finding herself a prisoner, it was natural that she should examine with special attention the windows of the room, with the idea of ascertaining whether, in case of danger, she might be able to escape by means of them. They were three in number; but, to her disappointment, she could not see through them, except in a misty, hazy way that made the moon, then shining brightly, a mere blur. They were, in fact, constructed of ground glass of great thickness, and, though relieved by a pattern, it was impossible to look from them, or that any one should be able to see into the room from without. This discovery was far from being a pleasant one.

More than an hour passed, and no one came. During all that time, not a sound had disturbed the

silence of the house. Zerina could not divine whether there was a living soul in it beside herself. Once she fancied she heard a movement as of servants in some distant part; but it might have been only fancy. She could not tell.

This utter silence was at length suddenly broken.

A key was turned in the lock, and the door of the room opened. Convinced that it would be Randolph, Zerina drew herself up proudly, and prepared to confront him with a burst of indignation. Her attitude was fine—statuesque—and met with instant critical approval.

"Bravo! Capital! Equal to Rachel," cried a gay voice, accompanied by softly applauding hands.

The words and the applause came, not from Randolph Agnew, but from Colonel Duplex!

Zerina's first feeling was one of relief at the sight of him. His petting, fatherly ways had won her confidence, and she ran toward him as to a friend.

But even in the act of doing so, the maidenly instinct caused her to desist, and draw back.

Something in the colonel's manner startled her. He was gay and bright, his eyes gleaming, and a flush on his fine face. Evidently he had devoted himself more assiduously than usual to the strong Dormer-Paget wines (which his taste, educated on clarets, usually led him to condemn), and real excitement—very different to the glittering frost-work which usually did duty for it with him—was the result.

"On my word, you'd make a delightful actress, child," he said, seeming not to notice her movement of alarm; "quite in the French manner, I protest. But what, may I ask, is the occasion of this charming display? Ah, I see, you are indignant at my little *ruse*. Well, well, 'tis quite natural—quite natural. You are sorry at losing your evening. Ah, my dear, when you have spent as many evenings in society as I have, you will be grateful to anybody who'll save you from one of them. Yes, if it's only a short one, my dear."

The light, airy manner of the man grated on the excited nerves of the young girl, and she fiercely interrupted him.

"What does this mean?" she demanded. "Why am I brought here—since it is by your contrivance?"

"Tut—tut! A little less fire, child," the colonel returned. "Let us sit and talk the matter over calmly—quietly. Take the arm-chair; this will do for me. So: quite *à la* Darby and Joan, I protest."

They were seated, one on either side the fire, by this time, and the colonel, deliberately crossing one leg over the other, prepared to defend his position.

"It is quite natural," he said, "when a young lady, especially a very young lady, expects a visit from a charming youth—a Lubin or Corydon, let us say—that she should pout a little at the entrance of Discretion in the person of—say a gentleman of my age. Lubin, with the pink cheeks, would have been so delightful that the colonel, in spite of his wit, seems a bore. Quite natural; but in the absence of Lubin, would it not be well to make the best of the colonel? Come, come, child, be reasonable, and not another tear, or I protest I'll kiss it from your cheek!"

"You have not answered my question," was her quick rejoinder.

"As to why you are here, and my reason for arranging this little comedy? True; but I will. You shall

know all. In a word, child, 'I have been cruel only to be kind.' The Dormer-Pagets are capital people, good-hearted, generous, and all the rest of it, but coarse. I like them much, but it was very easy for a man of my discernment to see that their house was not the place for you. It was positively shameful that you should have made your entry into society in such a set. It was ruin, and that ruin would have already begun but for the paternal care I have ventured to take of you. From the moment I gazed into that sweet face, its innocent purity won my heart, and I resolved to spare no pains to save you from the contamination of that terrible circle. You can hardly have been insensible to my fatherly care?"

He put this in the form of a question, but she did not reply.

"The maxims I have instilled into your mind," he went on, "and the advice and warnings I have given you, have been those of a father—a fond, loving father. Is it not so?"

"Yes," was the reluctant admission.

"Good! I knew you were not wanting in gratitude. Well, things have gone on in this way until I saw that they could go no further. While winter lasted I could have you under my care, but summer would tear you away—who could say whither? To argue with the Dormer-Pagets would have been absurd; they would not have understood the position. To propose to them to part with you would have been equally impracticable. One resource presented itself. It was to beguile you from the house, so that you might at least have the chance of being reared a lady—of occupying the position your beauty should command. This is all I have ventured to do. Am I wrong in looking for your forgiveness, if not your gratitude?"

The girl was startled.

Such apparent kindness and interest in her welfare quite disarmed her. But inexperienced as she was, the slight insight into human nature which the few weeks' experience under the Dormer-Paget roof had given her, enabled her to suspect the colonel's disinterestedness.

"But why should you have done all this?" she asked.

He clasped his hands and answered with fervour:

"Because—in a word, because I love you, Zerina!"

She looked at him in amazement.

"You—love—me?" she repeated slowly, word by word, rising as she did so.

"Yes, darling, with a warmth and intensity that break down all barriers, that admit of no impediments. This is the feeling which has prompted me to snatch you, in your innocent bloom, from the midst of those whose very breath is pollution, and nourish the hope that you will suffer me to rear you as my own!"

He moved toward her as he spoke, and now clutched one white hand between his palms.

With an impassioned movement, she shook him off.

"No!" she cried, "do not touch me. I appreciate your love at its proper worth. I see to what your disinterestedness has pointed. You have compromised me by this false step that you may bring me to ruin, and you ask me for gratitude! No, colonel, I am not so young but I understand what an avowal of love from a man of your class means; and though I may be in

your power here, I tell you to your face, I despise—I detest you!”

The colonel was wholly unmoved. Possibly he had listened to language of this kind before.

“Dear—dear!” he exclaimed. “We mustn’t get into heroics. Let us reason. I repeat that I love you, and I am not at all likely to relinquish you in favour of Lubin—who, by the way, in your case is called Randolph—or of any other rival. I have been accustomed to gratify my tastes at any cost; is it likely that I should begin to depart from so excellent a rule of life in a case where everything is in my favour? At present, you meet my advances with coldness. You even suffer yourself to go the length of expressing detestation. The term is a little strong; but we shall get over all that. As we come to jog on together day after day, we shall find that we have many sympathies in common, and you will see the folly of struggling against the inevitable—even if you do not substitute ‘admiration’ for ‘detestation’ before a week is over our heads.”

“A week!” Zerina exclaimed in alarm. “A week—where? What am I to understand?”

“Simply that I have made arrangements for our passing a week here in a quiet, domestic way—quite *à la* Darby and Joan, as I before said—so that we may comprehend each other before we decide where to betake ourselves for the summer—Paris, Rome, the Alps, Madrid, south of France—anywhere, everywhere that you may happen to fancy. Your pleasure will be mine; and as pleasure will be the sole business of our lives—hang it, we shall be foolish indeed if we don’t take our fill of it. There, there—enough for the present. I will leave you now to give the servants their orders. You will find the house replete with every comfort except one—that is, there is no means of quitting it. The clumsy builders forgot to give it a street door. Good-bye, child!”

He held out his hand in the kind, fatherly way he had all along adopted, but the outraged woman—for she felt herself a woman that night—indignantly refused it. Indignation, also, and the utter hopelessness of making any impression on such a man, restrained the appealing words which rose to her lips.

She suffered him to depart, and then clasped her throbbing head between her hands, and indulged in a paroxysm of weeping.

Some time elapsed before she was interrupted, then a woman servant entered the room, and informed her that supper awaited her in an adjoining apartment. It was a gratification to Zerina to see one of her own sex; but this woman was not calculated to excite rapturous emotions in any breast. Her face was plain and hard, her manners rough, her voice grating. She had something of the hospital nurse, something of the female prison-warder about her, and was wholly unlike the ordinary domestic servant.

In answer to the announcement of supper, Zerina pleaded that she had no appetite; but the woman received the announcement with a sneer.

“Stuff,” she said, bluntly; “you can eat.”

“But I assure you I am not hungry,” the child pleaded.

“Eat against you are,” was the conclusive rejoinder.

More out of curiosity as to what the other rooms of the house might be, than from any desire for food, Zerina followed the woman. They descended a handsome staircase into a spacious dining-room, where a slight repast was spread for one person only. The woman waited at table in a peremptory way, as if dealing with a refractory child, and insisted on the supper being partaken of. She was also firm as to wine being taken with it; and, when Zerina declined, poured out a glass and drank it herself; “to show,” as she said, “that it wasn’t drugged, nor poisoned, nor nothing of that”—a remark sufficiently suggestive to Zerina as to a form of danger to which she might be peculiarly liable in such a place.

Supper over, Zerina was, at her own request, conducted to the bed-room she was to occupy—a charming little nest at the very top of the house.

It was here that, before departing for the night, the woman abruptly uttered a few words of advice.

“Look here,” she said, “it’s no use your frettin’ your eyes out, and makin’ yourself miserable. We don’t want no gals a-grizzling about the ’ouse. The colonel’s a gentleman, and won’t do you no harm; and if he meant it you couldn’t help yourself. So just take a fool’s advice: treat him well, and he’ll treat you well. But fly in his face, and get his temper up, and I pity ye. Good night.”

With this parting benediction she quitted the room, and went clumping down the stairs in heavy boots, the sound of which was suddenly lost as she came to a door, which she closed and locked behind her.

Zerina lay awake for hours, staring at the moon as it shone full in at her window, and weeping all the while. At length, the habit of sleep so powerful in the young got the better of her, and she sank into troubled dreams.

And this was the first night’s experience of the bird in the cage.

Tom Cooke, the Actor.

AT a trial in the Court of King’s Bench in 1813, betwixt certain music publishers, as to an alleged piracy of an arrangement of the song of “The Old English Gentleman,” Cooke was subpoenaed as a witness by one of the parties.

On his cross-examination by Sir James Scarlett for the opposite side, that learned counsel questioned him thus—

“Now, sir, you say that the two melodies are the same, but different; now, what do you mean by that, sir?”

To this Tom promptly answered,—

“I said that the notes in the two copies were alike, but with different accent, the one being in common time, the other in six-eight time; and consequently the position of the accented notes was different.”

“Now, pray, sir, don’t beat about the bush, but explain to the jury, who are supposed to know nothing about music, the meaning of what you call accent.”

Cooke: “Accent in music is a certain stress laid upon a particular note, in the same manner as you would lay a stress upon any given word, for the purpose of being better understood. Thus, if I were to

say, 'You are an *ass*,' it rests on *ass*; but if I were to say, 'You are an *ass*,' it rests on *you*, Sir James."

Shouts of laughter by the whole court followed this repartee. Silence at length having been obtained, the judge, with much seeming gravity, accosted the counsel thus—

"Are you satisfied, Sir James?"

Sir James (who had become scarlet in more than name), in a great huff, said—

"The witness may go down."

At Her Grave.

BY MRS. W. SAWYER.

I COME—I come! you do not stir
With leaping welcome, as of old;
But breathing perfumes fill the air,
And Beauty blossoms through the mould;
As with fond step I hurry near,
An inarticulate cry I hear.

"Not, then, forgotten!" No, sweet saint;
By the fair cross above your head,
By all my life from day to day,
Life nearest death since you are dead;
In my bowed head and falling tears
No cold forgetfulness appears.

And let me whisper, dear, that all
Was ever loved by you I keep,
In a wild fancy that you know
And heed these treasures in your sleep;
A sleep that, ending by and by,
Shall make us ever cease to sigh.

Last night you were my dream. You came
And kissed my eyelids with a kiss,
Soothing and soft, and sighed my name;
I, over-conscious of my bliss,
Drew breath, when lo! you fled my sight;
I woke—but face to face with night.

To-day you are my living thought;
I feel you near, and turn to speak;
If you can see my face, my eyes
Will show how eagerly I seek;
Though some great awe has left you dumb,
I think in pity you will come.

Is it so certain? This repose,
My home's unrest, and yours so still;
Oh! make some sign of presence known,
This great heart-void of mine to fill;
Some sign that I may bear away,
And feed my love on day by day.

One moment—and a sad, sweet tone
Of bitter solace, strange and true,
Steals through the silence, half reproach—
"Am I not better lost than you?
Think, by your grief, how lone my state
Had Heaven left me desolate."

Yes. This my answer, this is all
Of consolation to the end.
While many a sorrow fills my life,
Safe and secure you rest, my friend.
My weary cross again I take,
A martyr still for your dear sake.

Wanderings in Half-a-Guinea.

BY MAJOR MONK-LAUSEN.

CHAPTER VI.—MONSTERS OF THE DEEP.

THE crisis was approaching: my head began to swim; my eye would be vanquished presently, and then nothing could retard the fatal bound. At this supreme moment something touched my hands: it was the rifle, which Peter Tromp, having capped and cocked it, put cleverly into them, mistrusting his own aim. Directly I grasped the weapon, my energies returned: once more I glared into the moolah's orbits with a power fully equal to her own, and bringing the rifle to my shoulder with lightning speed, I sent a bullet crashing through her brain. In the small fraction of a second which intervened between the flash from the muzzle and death, she was released from the power of my eye, and had therefore that ability to spring which sufficed to raise her on her hind legs—but no more; and she fell over on her back, stone dead, seriously injuring one of the cubs in her fall. For my part, I was fain to sit down, take a drink from my water bottle, and light my pipe, so exhausted was I by the struggle to exert magnetic influence when my powers were at so low an ebb. On hearing the shot, the rest of the party came up, and great was the general surprise on seeing the dead moolah. Before I could prevent it, they had despatched the cubs; but, indeed, it was the best thing to be done, for we could not take the little creatures away with us, and they must in all probability have perished miserably.

As we were still at some distance from our camping-ground, there was no time to take the skin of the moolah; so, leaving the bodies lying where they were, we spread out again and continued our journey—I recommending the greatest vigilance to all, as it was likely that we should fall in with the male moolah, exasperated by the desolation wrought upon his family. As we heard or saw nothing of him, however, the Poopooans were convinced that it was the father who had been killed by Atah, and their conjecture was probably correct. When we were within half a mile of the belt of trees, towards which we were making, however, Tulu put up a deer, and shot him dead this time, so that we arrived at the place where I determined to bivouac with materials for that supper which we all so much needed.

We made our way through this forest we had entered for several uneventful days, game being less plentiful than I had hitherto found it; and, at last, drink as well as meat seemed likely to fail us.

We had emptied our water bottles early in the day, and no spring or even stagnant pond had since been passed, and I began to feel the pangs of thirst. But this gave me no uneasiness, as several of the trees bearing the sherbet gourds—as I called them—could be seen here and there. I plucked one of these life-giving fruits, and, digging my teeth eagerly into the rind, sucked up—a mouthful of the most pungent, peppery dust you can imagine! My throat and nostrils were so choked with it that I never expected to get my breath again; and Peter Tromp, who was with me at the time, quite thought I was past recovery. Fortunately, however, there was a little drop of milk in the udder of the cow, which was poured down my throat; and I believe that, and a bleeding from the nose, just

saved my life. When I had got my wits again, I examined the deceptive gourd, and saw that there was a decided difference in its appearance, as well as in that of the tree upon which it grew, from that of the tree—delicious plant!—I had in my rash haste taken it for. And none of the right kind were to be met with in that day's march.

We were plodding along then in that silent, heavy way which characterises the gait of men who are beaten either by fatigue, lameness, or thirst, when suddenly there was a sheen through the trees which betokened the edge of the wood, and in a few paces farther we perceived that this shining was not that of the sky, but of a wide expanse of open water, the opposite shore of which could not be seen. Such a sudden realisation of the longings which had been my torment for hours seemed too good to be true. I feared a mirage, or an arm of the salt sea; and I was in the water chin-deep, and had swallowed a couple of quarts of it, before I felt perfectly certain that I was awake and in my right senses, and that it was verily a lake of pure, sweet water which lay stretched before me to the horizon.

The change was so delightful after the burning plains and gloomy forests which we had journeyed through for weeks, that I determined to remain on the shores of this lake for some little time, provided game was procurable, which was certain to be the case, for animals flock to the water-side as eagerly as do men.

No one was more pleased with the change than Mrs. Atah, who now had an opportunity of showing that she knew how to use those fish-hooks which I had furnished as an item of her marriage portion. With a bamboo cut on the spot for a rod, but a real Glasgow line of silk twist, and hooks with the true Limerick bend, and provided likewise with a good store of caterpillars, grasshoppers, and other likely baits, she perched herself upon a rock, prepared and threw in her lure, and presently jerked out a flat, triangular fish, with its mouth exactly in its centre. Next she caught a thing as round as a cricket ball; then a more respectable fish which I called a gudgeon, because it resembled one in shape, plumpness, and the marks on the skin; but it was very much bigger, weighing quite a quarter of a pound. It was these fish that Piti was endeavouring to catch, as she said they were the best eating of any in Half-a-Guinea; and when other sorts came to the bait, she endeavoured to draw it away from them, and guide it to the gudgeons. For from the rock where she squatted, and I stood behind her, the shoals of fish were clearly visible, far down in the pellucid water; and it was amusing to watch them dodging one another to get at the tempting morsel which would prove their ruin; just as we men do. They were so keen that, in spite of attempts at selection, Piti soon had a silvery pile of upwards of a dozen totally distinct sorts, very quaint some of them, by her side, in addition to a nice basket of the gudgeon. Just as she was landing one of these, a bigger fish than I had yet seen—a good thirty or forty-pounder, I should say—made a dash at it, biting it clean in two, but below the hook, as it left the water—a sight which determined me to do a little angling myself next day. The girl, however, who was afraid of losing her tackle if she hooked such a monster, shifted her place, and dropped her line in a fresh one. But after she had brought a few more gudgeons to bank, the same thing was repeated; only this fish was

not a quarter the size, for one thing, and he seized his prey by the head, and got hooked himself, for another. Coarse and strong as the tackle was, it took some doing to kill a six-pound fish or more without a running line; but Piti showed herself a proficient in the gentle craft. She played him beautifully, drowning him well before she attempted to draw him ashore, and then selecting a smooth shelving-place to land him at. Directly he was on dry land, I went up to clasp my hat over him before he should be able to break the line with his flounderings, and get back into the water. But this extemporized landing net was immediately pierced by a little dart, and directly afterwards another stuck in my boot, slightly pricking the leg. At the same time, Piti dropped her rod and ran back, calling to me to do the same.

"Take care, it is an archer-fish, milor!" she cried out in her own language.

And though I had never before heard of Pisces and Sagittarius being united in one form, a couple more projectiles penetrating my clothing warned me to retire. I caught up the rod, however, as I went, and keeping the line taut from a safe distance, I prevented this odd fish regaining its native element until its struggles relaxed and it lay quiet, when I once more cautiously approached, knocked it on the head, and proceeded to examine it. It was armed with numerous spikey fins, somewhat resembling those of a perch, and from these it possessed the power of shooting out the spikes after the fashion of a porcupine. Piti said that this was a very small archer-fish, quite a baby, in fact; but that when they grew to any size, their arrows were formidable. This account was confirmed by the other Alfoers, who had all seen or heard of the fish; but the Poopooans of the coast, Atah and Tulu, knew nothing of it. It was likewise as strange to Peter Tromp as it was to myself, and we dissected the specimen carefully together, endeavouring to find out where the projectile power lay, but without success. The quills or spines were very light, thin, and sharp at the point; when of this small size they make excellent needles, a hole having been drilled at the blunt end, though of course more brittle than steel. The point is neither barbed nor poisonous. All the fish Piti had caught were cooked, and none of them were bad; but the gudgeons were by far the best, as she had asserted they would be. Indeed, the change of diet was such a treat to me that I should have dined entirely off them if there had been enough; but when I had ate my share, my appetite still demanded a palm leaf of jugged hare, some of these animals having been knocked on the head by the men, and deliciously prepared by Peter.

I had with me a salmon rod of the largest and toughest make, strong enough to hold a whale; with a good winch, and several hundred yards of the strongest line made. I had also some large hooks of excellent temper. From what I had seen of the fishing from the bank, it was evident to me that the best sport was to be had farther out, and that I must get afloat somehow. For not only was I more likely to hook a good one, I should have a better chance of securing him when hooked. For if the fish I had seen bite Piti's gudgeon in half had any friends much bigger than himself, I could not possibly hope to have a chance with them unless I could follow them up. Even the one in

question would run my line out, and then either break all, tear away, or drag me into the water after it. My first idea was a coracle, as a kind of vessel which I could readily make myself; for though I could see no fit osiers, the bamboo was an excellent substitute. My men, however, were far better boat-builders than I was; and when they saw what I wanted, they presently made me an excellent canoe out of bamboo branches and the skins of deer. This canoe was pointed at the ends, was well balanced, easy to sit, and could be propelled through the water by a rude paddle at a rare rate. When I found myself afloat in it, my notion of a coracle seemed to me barbarous and stupid to a degree. How should I ever have got along without a stream in one of those unmanageable clothes-baskets? Piti had caught me a good stock of small fish for live bait, and these I towed overboard in a net.

When I had paddled out a mile or so, I prepared my line, carefully arranging the live bait in the most approved fashion, with a hook near the head, and another towards the tail. A larger flight I could not afford, considering the strong chance of losing all. My attached fish had not been swimming about five minutes before it was seized, and thirty yards of line ran out before I could get a check on the proceeding. When I was able to wind up a bit and feel my friend, I could control his rushes somewhat; and as when I refused to give him line he towed the canoe, there was little fear of his breaking the stout, twisted silk. By degrees I drowned him and got him to the boat-side, where I struck a home-made gaff which I had brought into his gills, and hauled him on board, where a thrust from a knife in the top of the head at once quieted his very inconvenient bounds and tail-lashings. He was four feet long, and shaped something like a salmon, only thicker and with an uglier head; but he did not give anything like the play a salmon half his size would have done.

From this speedy first success I anticipated a good day's sport; but though I believe that I hooked several much larger fish, judging from the strength and velocity of their rushes, they managed either to tear away from the hook, or else to snap it off at the shank. Half-a-dozen of my largest hooks were thus spoiled, and the fish lost, before I got firm hold of a fellow who, whether he was lighter or less skilful, or with a different sort of mouth, seemed unable to get away. A queer action in swimming this fish had, darting rapidly from side to side, in a constant zigzag.

At last he rose to the surface from a great depth, so rapidly that I had a job to reel up quickly enough; and while I was thus employed he sprang some six feet out of the water, and I saw a queer, oblong, golden-coloured creature, with immense spikey fins sticking out all round it. I immediately recognised a very much larger edition of Piti's archer-fish, and lest any doubt should remain upon my mind, an arrow, quite two feet long, struck the rude paddle which lay across my knees as I sat at the bottom of the canoe, and there stood quivering. As the point passed entirely through the hard wood, it was evident that the formidable nature of the missile had not been exaggerated. Having fired his shot, the fish dropped back into the water, and resumed his tortuous course downwards.

I had left my rifle on shore, but had my revolver with me; so I let the line run out from the reel as it would,

holding the rod in my left hand, while I drew the pistol from its belt, cocked it, and laid it down handy. Presently the fish once more rushed up, and I wound in the line till he was close to the top; then, quitting the reel with my left hand, I caught up the pistol, and when the creature sprang into the air, we exchanged shots. My bullet took effect in the centre of his body; his arrow perforated the muscular portion of the calf of my left leg. It was a regular duel.

He felt the effects of his wound, for the succeeding rush was weaker and shorter than the preceding; and when he came up I was again ready for him, and he received a second bullet, while his arrow was projected with far less force than the other two, as well as with inferior accuracy, for it glanced harmlessly past me and fell in the water. After this his struggles were but slight, and he was perfectly unable to leap into the air; so as I did not deem it desirable to attempt to get such a mitrailleuse of a fish into the same boat with me, and as likewise the sun was getting too high to be pleasant out on the open lake, without an awning to shelter one from its tropical beams, I proceeded to paddle towards the shore, towing my late antagonist after me—first, however, drawing the natural arrow from my leg. It was about the thickness of a knitting needle, and as it merely passed through the muscles, there was hardly any bleeding. I was in such perfect condition at the time that the wound gave me no more discomfort than if I had nicked myself in shaving.

"I wish that you could catch a sturgeon, milor," said Peter Tromp, as we sought shelter under the trees from the noontide heat. "The roe is very good."

"Are there any sturgeons in this part of the world?" I asked in surprise.

"Yes," said Peter; "or at least a fish very much like the sturgeon to look at, and also in the flavour of its roe. Of course I do not know whether there are any in this lake, since I was never here before; but there are in another lake, close to the opposite coast from Howdow, and the best bait is a monkey's tail."

"Have you ever caught any?"

"Yes, once."

"And with a monkey's tail?"

"Not exactly; we took them in a net."

"Tell me all about it," said I.

Peter settled himself comfortably, and began:—

"There is a little river which flows from the lake I am speaking of into the sea, and the vessel in which I was taking a cruise was anchored off the mouth of it. We were kept waiting for the cargo we had come for to be collected, and had some idle days, on one of which the captain proposed to take the two boats and explore the river, carrying nets with us, to see what sort of freshwater fish it contained.

"So we started, two in each boat, I going with the captain, who took with him Jocko, his pet monkey, and the ugliest ape I think I ever saw, but very amusing with his queer ways. Well, the current in the river was not so strong as we anticipated; and after dragging the boats over some small rapids we came to about a mile up, we got on so smoothly and easily that presently we reached the lake, and determined to explore it. It was very small, but seemed to be deep, and was surrounded by hills, which looked to the captain's eye as if gold ought to be found amongst them. We were discussing this question as we floated quietly

on the surface of the lake, Jocko squatting gravely in the bow of the boat, with his tail dragging in the water, and his head on one side, listening apparently to all that we said, as if he took the deepest interest in the discovery of precious metals; when presently there was a splash and a snap, and a big fish rose at the tail of poor Jocko, who went over backwards into the lake with an unearthly yell, and presently disappeared. Though we were sorry for the poor beast, it was difficult to help smiling, the accident happened so facetiously. He had hardly gone under, however, before the captain, who was a man of really admirable presence of mind, seized the net and commenced throwing it overboard; and, seeing his intention, I caught up the sculls, and commenced rowing in a circle round the spot.

"I had not got half round, however, before it became evident that something was entangled in the meshes, upon which we both began to haul in as fast as we could. This was not so very rapid, for the weight was something considerable, leading us to suppose at first that we had netted a shoal; but presently we perceived that there were caught in the toils but two fishes—and Jocko! The fishes were of large size, and tore the net to pieces in their efforts to escape; nevertheless, I believe we should have had both of them, if it had not been our principal object to get the monkey's head above water, and so give him a chance of life. We managed this several times, and then down he was ducked again. At last one of the fish broke away and swam off, carrying a considerable portion of net with him, like a man who has been sitting in a chair covered with anti-macassars; and then we contrived to haul the other and the monkey into the boat."

"Drowned, of course?"

"No, milor; when he had got rid of the water he had swallowed, and lain in the sun for a quarter of an hour, he came to life again. But his tail was gone, close to the root. He had a way for some weeks afterwards of feeling for it, and turning round to see what had become of it, which was very comical. The fish was that creature of the sturgeon kind which I was speaking of. We got more of them afterwards, and preserved the roe."

I wish it to be distinctly understood that this is Peter Tromp's account, not mine; and that I do not hold myself in any way accountable for its accuracy. I myself believe it, though the resuscitation of the monkey after it had been for so long under water is not characterized by that strong probability which invites implicit credence. If the adventure had happened to me, I might, with that tender sensitiveness which impels me to leave unrecorded the most marvellous events of my travels, have felt inclined to suppress it. I know the exemplary Tromp, and can trust his word—an act of faith which cannot reasonably be demanded of the reader. Therefore, if any persons form a company for the purpose of obtaining caviare from the lakes of Half-a-Guinea, they must clearly understand that they do so on their own responsibility. I may also mention, incidentally, that it will be useless to apply to me to take shares, for since I never myself caught any fish at all resembling the sturgeon, I cannot believe them to be common.

When Peter had finished his story, I indulged in a siesta until the heat of the day was passed; and then,

taking my rifle, I strolled along the shores of the lake to see if I could get something for supper, taking Tulu with me to carry the game. From the spot where our camp was to a bit of rocky ground, about a couple of miles off, there was no animal to be seen, which did not surprise me, since the smoke of our fire was calculated to scare the wild creatures away; but on reaching this little eminence, and cautiously scaling it, I perceived a curious appearance, like branches of coral, or the dead boughs of trees, rising out of the water, and close to the shore of the lake, at some little distance. Looking through my pocket telescope, I perceived that these were in reality antlers, and a longer inspection showed me a herd of deer standing breast-high in the water, which was shallower there than in our part. The question was how to stalk them. I could have made for the wood, and worked round that way, had they been on the bank; but the formation of the ground was such that, though the trees came to within a couple of hundred yards of the water's edge, I could not have seen them from its shelter. Suddenly the idea struck me that I might take a leaf from Macbeth; and, cutting a branch from a tree, I stripped, and went into the water on our side of the rocky promontory, and pushing the bough before me with the left hand, while I held my rifle high and dry with the right, I waded round the projection, and approached the herd, like a miniature edition of Birnam Wood going to Dunsinane. As the deer took no notice, but seemed to think it quite natural that a tree should come floating along in this fashion, I got within a hundred yards of them, and then, leaving my bough, I took a steady aim between its leaves, and shot a buck through the head. He fell over in the water, the remainder made for land with a rare splashing, and as they touched the bank I dropped another with a ball through the heart. Tulu, directly he heard the shots, came running up with my clothes, and when I had retrieved my stag in the water, and dressed, we carried our venison back to camp.

The Man in the Open Air.

WHILE this weather lasts—with the thermometer so high that we are too exhausted to reach it—the Man in the Open Air likes to be as much as possible on the open water, or in the quiet shade. A broad-brimmed straw hat, enfolded with muslin, is our head-gear; and nankeens, from shoulders to ankles, our "togger;" with shoes that look as if we had been doing duty in a lime-kiln. Thus, sometimes lying at the bottom of our boat, or prone beneath the cool shadows of a river-side hanging wood, we almost listlessly pass away our sultry hours, and should consider this doing idleness well, with no one to help us, if it were not for the flies.

Cannot any one invent something that would keep these persistent plagues from exploring the tunnels of our nostrils, and seeking moisture from under our eyelids? Surely there must be some remedy, if not within our reach, in that of the chemist.

What don't flies like? This once ascertained, a fortune awaits the discoverer. It is said they will not enter a room in the window of which are the scarlet geranium and the calceolaria. But we are not in a room now; and to carry a van of flower-pots in full

bloom whenever we desire to enjoy an *al fresco* snooze, or dream the day away, would scarcely be practicable for one who does not even take a black boy with him to fill his meerscham.

Again, a net spread across the entrances to an apartment, we were told, was an effectual barrier to these domestic nuisances; but we have tried it, and it is a delusion, and certainly a snare. Briggs the immortal, of *Punch*, believed in it, by putting his landing net over his head; but found that his nose, which went through one of the meshes, became a settling-point for all the flies on the river's margin. Tomson's paint, soft soap, potato flour, have in turn been recommended; but they are all shams. We admit that coal-tar is effectual up to a certain point, but who is going to turn his head—a head turned already if he did—into a "catch-em-alive-oh!"?

It's all well enough upon paper to talk about the comforts of the open air during ordinary weather; but when your coppers get so hot in your pockets that they are disposed to melt before you can change them, and you cannot place your hand upon anything without blistering your fingers, it becomes a little too hot for anything like serious consideration.

Why, we have been out two or three days this week to picnics in which shirt-sleeves were the prevailing fashion of the gentlemen; and even the old dowagers were impelled to throw all devotion to appearances aside, and with it their false fronts. Indeed, the very ice, the duty of which was to keep all around it cool, forgot in the general fusation its natural mission, and perspired like a tallow-chandler's wife at a city ball.

Even now, as we write, our inkstand requires a five minutes' refresher of fluid, or it gets like a carp pond on a common, one part moisture and ninety-nine parts mud.

The man who desired to take off his flesh and sit in his bones would have had the worst of it, surrounded, as we are, with an atmosphere of 140°; and his marrow would stand but little chance of retaining its oleaginous character in its osseous pipes.

But what, under such circumstances, can we write about? Fish?—yes, their frying. Oh, there is a fellow in a canoe just passed, with—what a mockery!—a sail up, when there is not enough wind to raise the feathers on a butterfly's wing. Why may he not have a sail up if he likes? Perhaps it screens him from the sun. If so, we are in error for once, and he is wise. Why, then, did we in our conscience throw a word of censure at him?

Let us erase the hasty impression.

We have it: our old friend Ringleader used to tell us that unquestionably the most dangerous part of canoeing was sailing. These little vessels will carry their small sails through very dirty weather; but it is certainly advisable that all men who hold canvas on canoes should indulge in plenty of practice on smooth water during light winds, after having mastered the useful art of swimming. So, then, perhaps that chap yonder, working his arms and paddles like a frenzied windmill, is waiting for a breeze; and, as sailors whistle for one, it is our opinion that so may he.

By George, how he is going along now with the current. Is he practising for a match? No; canoe racing is an ugly exhibition, and can never become popular. Nor can the most enthusiastic Thames Indian be sur-

prised at this; for there is nothing in the sight of a set of fellows paddling about at one time to attract anything but semi-merriment.

Give us, however, canoe cruising. That is a horse of another colour; and it is undoubtedly to the pleasure and gratification attached to this unique amusement that canoeing owes its rapidly-reached and enduring popularity.

But a man must crawl before he can walk, and the first lessons to be learned by the young canoeist relate to the wielding of his paddle. "Nothing within the scope of aquatic exercises," would Ringleader say, "is more simple than paddling; but it is doubtful whether this very simplicity is not the greater cause of that carelessness which is so manifest."

The paddle should be from seven to eight feet; and with this a man may step into his canoe, push from the shore, and grasp the paddle with both hands, keeping them from eighteen inches to two feet apart. Getting firmly settled upon the cushion, which should not be too high, and having his feet tightly pressed against the stretcher, he may begin to make way. The paddle blade should be thrust into the water at right angles to the keel, when it may be pulled straight through, and followed as quickly as possible by a corresponding motion on the opposite side of the canoe. Experience teaches that short, sharp strokes are productive of greater effect than long ones, although there can be no doubt that for a lengthened journey the deliberate drag is more effective—while, so far as appearance is concerned, there can be no comparison between the two styles; so that, for ordinary work, the quick, long stroke should be practised, as more nearly approaching perfection.

Those who paddle for enjoyment will find it better to sit with shoulders well back and head up, reaching forward only with the arms, and bringing the blades of their paddles with all after, at every stroke.

But here comes Platt with the claret cup, and not before our parched corporeal being was ready for it. Gurgle-gurgle-gurgle. How delicious!

The wild horehound is now in full bloom in waste places and hedges, and will continue so for the whole of this month. It should be cut down from the stem, and tied in bundles; and, when required, an extract may be obtained from it, by boiling, of great use in hysterical cases; and, when mixed with sugar and the watery portion evaporated, we have the bitter sweetmeat of the confectioner and chemist. In Gothland, it is a universal remedy in disorders incidental to cattle. It is often taken in this country by the casual observer for the dumb nettle, which it much resembles at a first glance, but a closer comparison will at once show a wide and obvious distinction.

DR. THOMPSON, a celebrated physician in his day, and equally remarkable for the slovenliness of his person, could not endure the sight of muffins, and in his medical capacity always spoke of them as very unwholesome. On his breakfasting once at Lord Melcombe's when Garrick was present, a plate of muffins was introduced, when the doctor grew outrageous, and vehemently called out, "Take away the muffins!" "No, no," said Garrick, seizing the plate, "take away the ragamuffins!"

Schools of Practical Cookery.

THE chairman of the Committee of Schools of Cookery writes to the *Times* to say that—

"It may not be generally known that a small school of cookery has been established in Kensington-place, near the Notting-hill-gate station. An experienced teacher from South Kensington has been engaged, and practice classes for young ladies are held in the morning, and for the upper girls from the national schools in the afternoon.

"At some of the provincial branches—for instance, Leamington and Hereford—referred to in the *Times* notice of the meeting at the South Kensington school, the 'demonstration' classes for artisans have been attended by two and three hundred people; and it is hoped that, among four hundred poor huddled away in the back streets of West Kensington and Campden-hill, similar demonstrations (two of which have been given) will meet with some success. The poor of London are tired and worn out by hard work and unhealthy habits, and are difficult to attract to lectures on any subject; still, it is to be hoped that, with a little pecuniary assistance given by those interested in this scheme, frequent and lively demonstrations may be given by some of the ablest of the South Kensington staff.

"The cost of the *batterie de cuisine* has been nearly defrayed by donations, but there is still some £20 or £30 to be paid off."

We have no wish whatever to throw cold water upon any movement which professes to be for the good of the community and the poor especially; and we here confine ourselves to a few comments upon the above, by the light of our personal experience, taking it with confidence for our text as it comes officially before us. These "demonstration" classes for the poor, which have been attended by two or three hundred people, make certainly a grand display, and are particularly impressive while they last, as well they may be upon an audience upon whose olfactories and optics the cooking of comestibles at any time makes a great and "lively" impression. But those engaged in this culinary reform should, as we have done, follow their audience, not only beyond the limits of the lecture-room, but to their own humble homes. Then these gentlemen will see the mental intoxication which the aroma of the viands has infused into the brains of their hearers gradually evaporate as they mix with the outer atmosphere, and the mud altogether reduced to the pure and grim fact of the fallacy of this Barmecidean teaching when they have reached their ill-furnished grates—where there are to be found the *batterie de cuisine* with which, like the hocus-pocus of Maskelyne and Cook, the lookers-on have been treated to unreality—unreality, because the results are only obtainable, first, by the best and choicest of condiments, and then by the uses of expensive paraphernalia, which is as much out of their reach as silver plate and costly china. In our simple way of looking at this movement, we cannot but agree with the opinion of the best judges—the poor themselves—that it is a cruel sham. Do not we here have the chairman honestly confess that the subscriptions have been inadequate to the means of teaching these people, and that there is still £20 to £30 necessary to purchase instruments to complete the means of instruction?" Not, let it be understood, to lend out to their

pupils—no, but to send them away after being blinded with an array of brilliant copper saucepans, with enamelled and plain iron, for stewing, braising, digesting, preserving, &c.; the cost of which for a cottage, at the lowest estimate, according to "Warne's Model Cookery," would be £4.5s.; a medium set, £10 15s.; while the "kitchen utensils absolutely required by a good cook" come to £38 10s.

And what would we do? Lay out a few five-pound notes in the wholesale purchase of crates of *pots-au-feu*, or common earthenware pipkins, and teach the poor and the wife of the artisan to make the most of this simple appliance; which is almost all that is needed, with a few sticks, for the foreign housewife to serve up a dainty, wholesome, and relishing dish to her partner and family. This would not require shelves upon shelves of copper vessels, the cost of which is admitted to be even beyond the funds of this society; but be at once descending to practical facts and means which are within the comprehension of the class the interests of whom these philanthropists affect to have in consideration.

Salmon Eggs for Australia.

A LARGE consignment of salmon eggs has left the London Docks in the ship *Durham* for Australia, where several attempts have been made from time to time to stock the rivers of that country with fish of the true *salmo salar* species. So far, the endeavours of pisciculturists to propagate this valuable fish in waters at the antipodes have not been attended with very successful results. Thousands of ova have, indeed, been safely carried through the tropics, and deposited in a healthy condition in various waters of our Australian colonies, but as yet we have had no authentic information to warrant the belief that salmon are actually established and likely to increase there.

Rumours occasionally have been heard of the appearance or capture of a veritable salmon, which enthusiastic naturalists consider are sufficient to establish the fact that the "salmonization" of colonial waters has been accomplished. These rumours have unfortunately been too vague and unsupported to denote definitely the success of the undertaking, and until more evidence is forthcoming we must defer the gratification of congratulating our Colonial neighbours on having their waters stocked with a valuable food-producing and sporting fish. Were, indeed, the rumours which have cropped up occasionally correct as to the presence of salmon in those far-off waters, it would only denote the fact that a few of the many hundred thousands of eggs which have been distributed over the colony at various periods had thriven and grown into adult fish, and would in no way demonstrate the permanent introduction and acclimatization of the fish.

That certain Australian waters are suited for other specimens of the *salmonida*, we happily have evidence of the most convincing description. Rivers in which trout were unknown a few years ago are now supplied with thousands of these fish (the offspring of eggs despatched from England), which are increasing and multiplying yearly in a most astonishing and satisfactory manner.

The trout introduction has indeed been a most sig-

nal success, and has been accomplished at far less trouble and expense than that spent on the salmon experiment. As compared with the latter, only a mere "handful" of trout eggs have been sent to Australia, but with so successful a result that we believe it is considered unnecessary to send any more, the fish being now firmly established in the colony.

The carrying out to a satisfactory issue of the salmon experiment appears to us to depend not so much on getting the ova out in a healthy condition, as on the suitability of the Australian waters for the rearing and propagation of that fish. Of wandering habits, they are of a more delicate nature than their hardy cousins the trout; require water of a rather low temperature to live in, and free access to and from the sea, conditions which are absolutely necessary for their well-being. Whether such exists at the antipodes has not been satisfactorily settled. It is said, however, that the migratory sea or white trout has done well there, and therefore the salmon ought to flourish.

As in the case of the salmon proper, evidence is also wanting of the presence of migratory trout in any quantities; and, on the same ground that "one swallow does not make a summer," we cannot as yet pronounce the "salmonization" of Australian waters an accomplished fact.

The Egotist's Note-book.

WHEN something novel was required to whet the appetites of the lovers of sensation, we were, some years ago, regaled at the Holborn Amphitheatre with a new form of acrobaticism—to wit, the "Enchanting Lulu," who "would leap into the air a distance of sixty feet"—*vide* advertisement. I went and saw this performance, and truly wonderful I thought it; but, like the proverbial pitcher, Lulu has taken the leap—or rather, been shot up—once too often; for we read that at a large circus in Dublin, a few nights ago, she "missed her tip," and instead of dropping into the net, she fell against the gallery railings, and thence rebounded into the arena, her fall being so fearful as to break one of the benches. One could moralise, but *Cui bono?* The multitude like entertainments plentifully spiced with danger.

It was only the other day I witnessed the very clever performance of Young Blondin on the tight-rope at the Alexandra Palace, but his entertainment was received with the greatest apathy. Why? Simply because his rope was only a few feet from the ground, and there was no chance of seeing a poor fellow-creature maimed for life, or killed. Had his rope been at an altitude of, say, a hundred feet, his performance would have been greeted with thunders of applause. Such is human nature—at least, one phase of it.

This is what a London correspondent to a country paper says of us poor scribblers:—"To judge from appearance, literature is not a very profitable profession. I had occasion lately to spend a good deal of time at the reading-room of the British Museum library, and of all the badly-dressed, unwashed, unshaven, unkempt persons ever collected in a public room, the frequenters of that library are certainly the seediest. And yet a

large proportion are not the mere rank and file of the profession, mere literary hacks and penny-a-liners; names "familiar in our mouths as household words," men famous wherever the English language is spoken, are there. But a single magazine article, for which the publisher would pay ten guineas, would defray the annual tailor's bill of most of these celebrities; and, to the shame of the craft be it said, there are few of its profession whose brain-work does not prevent their giving any attention to the exterior of their heads. Most of them are prematurely bald—most stoop—many are asthmatic. In society they are often as shy and awkward as a senior wrangler; and, in point of fact, they are, as a rule, pleasanter in their writings than in their persons."

Of course no good can accrue from such feats as swimming across the Channel, and the folly of struggling on in such an attempt, to the injury of a man's constitution, is patent. Mr. Clement Walter, the Dover surgeon who accompanied Cavill, states that the swimmer maintained a fair temperature till noon. Shortly before one he became perfectly white, and began to roll about in the water like a struggling dog. The doctor said he would not hold himself responsible for the swimmer's life, and preparations were at once made to get him out. A sheet was cast under his body, and he was lifted into the boat, a matter of some difficulty with so heavy a man. He was perfectly unconscious, and remained so for over twenty minutes, notwithstanding that every effort was made to resuscitate him. He was for a time almost pulseless. Toms, the pilot, asserts positively that when taken out of the water Cavill was within four miles of the French coast. It is impossible, however, to help admiring the thorough British pluck of the effort. By the way, Cavill, with whom I once had some interviews connected with the writing of a work on natation, is of a broad, frog-shaped figure, and seems as if made for a merman.

The Turks must love the ladies—*vide* their Zenanas—but it does not follow that the ladies love the Turks. Certainly, the Servian ladies bear them no goodwill, for a correspondent from the seat of war says—"A lady of Servian extraction has followed General Zach's army, I believe, from the beginning of the war; and when there is an engagement, she is always on horseback in the van, hacking at the Turks." Our friend does not say with what implement the lady does her hacking: probably a pair of scissors.

THE season has arrived when every one is thinking of turning from the sultriness of town life to the pleasures of a country tour. Ladies who take very little exercise when at home, with true British courage often undertake long and tedious journeys. It is of the highest importance, under such circumstances, that the clothing should in no way impede the proper circulation of the blood, but especially should the old but bad practice of gartering the leg be avoided. Mr. Almond, of 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, has provided the only means of remedying this in his New Patent Stocking Suspender, which he will send by post for 2d. extra. The prices are—Children's, 1s. 6d.; maids', 2s.; ladies', 3s. Our advice is to write at once for a pair.

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